

# The Resurrection and Life Eternal



A Study of the Resurrection of the  
Body and the Glory of the new  
Heaven and the new Earth.



—By—

REV. J. J. KNAP

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# THE RESURRECTION *and* LIFE ETERNAL

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of the Body and the Glory  
of the new Heaven and the  
new Earth       :       :       :*

BY

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THE RESURRECTION  
and LIFE ETERNAL



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

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*I*N 1927 the Eerdmans Publishing Co. published a book of the Rev. J. J. Knap of the Netherlands that dealt with the state of the soul between death and resurrection.

*The title of that book was: LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE.*

*In introducing the Rev. Knap to our American public I stated: "The Rev. Knap is a minister in the Established Church (Hervormde Kerk) and a leader among the orthodox group of that church. He is a defender of the faith once delivered to the saints."*

*This present volume is a companion study to LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE. In this book the Rev. Knap writes in a popular way of the Resurrection of the Body and Life Eternal. He gives his views on the resurrection body, the judgment, the millenium, and other matters that are connected with the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*Though the first purpose of this book is informative, the Rev. Knap again and again brings words of comfort to God's people, and words of warning to those who remain in sin. He speaks to our hearts as well as to our minds.*

*On some subjects there will be honest difference of opinion between the children of God. All will not agree with every detail of the Rev. Knap's exposition. But all will rejoice with him in their common hope.*

*This is an uplifting book. May God use it to strengthen the faith of many, and to comfort those that mourn. And may we ever keep the apostolic word before our minds: "And every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (I John 3:3.)*

K. BERGSMA.

THE DEVOURING GRAVE



I

THE DEVOURING GRAVE

*"Dust thou art, and unto dust  
shalt thou return."*

*Genesis 3: 19.*

**L**IFE BEYOND THE GRAVE is the title of a book in which we discussed the state of the soul between death and resurrection. (See Preface.)

Our expectations for the future go beyond the resurrection, however. We have not reached the limits of our hope with a description of the life of the soul in the heavenly glory. The hope that is in us also causes us to ponder on the condition of both soul and body when the graves shall have been opened, and after the resurrection and the last judgment life eternal begins.

It is indeed true that we will meet many problems here that we cannot solve. It is simply impossible to answer all the questions that arise, especially since we do not



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want to leave the firm basis of Revealed Truth. In so far, however, as the Word of God sheds its light on the future, including the final destiny of humankind, it is both the duty and desire of our hearts to consider this revelation in order that our Christian hope may reach its full development.

Many fail here.

They know that we have the following article in our ancient Confession: "I believe the resurrection of the body and life eternal," but they make no practical application of that truth. With many this creed is *confessed*, but not *lived*. They derive but little comfort from it, and give themselves no account of the wide perspective which the Christian hope opens up before us. Their hope really goes no farther than the expectation of a blessed existence of the SOUL in heaven with Christ, where all its needs will be fully satisfied. What will happen to the body,—that is something they hardly consider. They seem to think that the one phrase of Scripture is final: "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return."

This is indeed an awful truth.

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

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Our body was once dust, unformed clay, belonging to the world of atoms, having no beauty or glory. Our Creator formed our beautiful and finely-constructed human body from this common clay, and made it a living soul with His Divine breath that we might have royal rule over all the lower creation, and sanctify it as a Priest unto God. But as a result of sin this beautiful, kingly body must return again to the dust from whence it came, dust, unformed, poor, ugly.

Such is the message of the grave.

Its message is so piercing and loud that every one must hearken. It is so convincing that every one must say yea and amen, and we are involuntarily inclined to have no hope for this handful of dust, but rather to see in the devouring grave the final destruction of the body. In poetical language we then call the body the worn-out garment that covered the soul during its pilgrimage on earth, a garment that has had its purpose when the soul enters its heavenly home. It can, therefore, be laid aside forever.

We hardly dare think of what happens to it in the bosom of the earth. To keep

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it from its natural process of decay many, both in and outside of Christendom, have the dead body cremated. But in both cases it returns to the dust. And—as we are told again and again—this dust is used again by nature, in accordance with its law that nothing is lost, to build up the cells of plants, and possibly even of animals. But it seems impossible that a new human body shall arise from that dust, a body which will be reunited with its soul, and never be separated from it again throughout all eternity.

The idea that the grave is final has in it something appealing for those who are not anchored in the Word of God. It also seems to bear scientific approval. And the human race by nature rather listens to the wisdom of the world than to the voice of Scripture. It does this the readier since the facts seem to agree with unbelief,—the awful facts of the grave, of decay, and of the dissolution of the body, which after some time totally disappears.

Yet nature also speaks another language,—the language of the resurrection. Every fall you behold the slow decay of the glory of creation. The last flowers fade; the

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leaves become sere, and fall from the trees; and finally nature enters the death of winter, and the snow covers all with a white shroud.

But in the spring life arises from this death in new splendor; nature celebrates its easter, and chill death makes way for a colorful life of a thousand tints. It is a miracle of which ancient poets have already sung. Though not a perfect picture, it is nevertheless a prophecy of the resurrection of the body.

Under the influence of this yearly reanimation of all creation the idea took root even among the Heathen that the human body, which was the crown of material creation, could not hopelessly disappear in the grave. Would the woods and fields, the flowers and herbs, arise annually from the grave, and would there be no such prospect for the human body? Would a grain of wheat that is cast into the earth, and there dies, arise from its grave as a golden stalk crowned with its ear, and the human body, that far surpasses a grain of wheat, remain forever in the grave?

That seemed an absurd idea.

Therefore we find all kinds of customs

among the Heathen that speak of a hope, or at least of a surmise, that the grave does not end all. What else is the meaning of the custom some tribes have of burying a small ladder with the corpse? You realize that this expresses the hope that the dead shall arise from the grave, and that they wanted to make this easily possible for him who had died. This same expectation is expressed in the care bestowed on the corpses. As far as we know there is not a single people, not even a wild tribe, that lets the bodies of those that died remain as prey in the open field.

No doubt it is due partly to a common feeling of human respect that men treat dead bodies with reverence. But in any case, it was more than respect that made it customary for many nations to embalm their dead. The viscera would be removed from the body, and would be replaced with strong, fragrant herbs that would halt putrefaction. And if this were too expensive, the corpse would be placed in a salt solution for some time, and would later be mummified. In the one case as well as in the other, however, the purpose was to keep the body from a too swift dissolution

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and decay. As much as possible men wanted to keep the body whole and inviolate. We know from Scripture that the body of Joseph was also embalmed, and that the Israelites later took this body, usually called a mummy, with them in a coffin while on their pilgrimage through the desert, and buried it in the holy land according to the command of Joseph.

This desire to preserve the dead body from decay can only be explained from the conviction that the body was not simply laid aside as some worn-out garment of the soul. Why should men preserve it so carefully, if there were no hope of the resurrection in their hearts? With many this hope was probably vague and unconscious, but nevertheless the hope was there that existence did not end with death.

Is it not evident from these data that the hope of the resurrection did not first arise in the human soul after Christ had risen from the grave? Usually the people who believe in the Bible think that we shall arise because Christ has risen. But the Word of God says the very opposite. Just think of the words of Paul in I Corin-

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thians 15: "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised." The apostle proceeds here from the general resurrection of the dead. This is proof for him that Christ also is raised up. We will not, therefore, arise because Christ has left the grave, but His resurrection is an assurance of our BLESSED resurrection, if we believe in Him. The hope of the resurrection existed long before that great Easter-day, even though the hope was dim, and not shared by all.

The Gospel brought a clearer light, however.

We who have an open Bible in our possession know that the grave cannot always keep us as its prey. The saving work of Christ would be but half finished, were our soul to receive eternal life in heaven, while our body remained in the grave. Jesus Christ is a great Savior. He is not only the Savior of *souls*, but of *men*, both as to body and soul. As His first coming was mainly for the salvation of the soul, so His second coming shall mean the salvation and glorification of the body.

Death and burial are not, therefore, the end of life.

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When we close the coffin, and throw some handfuls of earth on it as we lower it in the grave, we are not putting a period after man's existence.

It does mean the end of much sorrow, much care, much labor, much love and faithfulness, and the end of much sin and desire to sin. But the great and final end of life is, praise God, not death and the closed grave, but an open grave and life eternal. That is the final destiny of all the children of God.





## HOSTILE VIEWS



## II

### HOSTILE VIEWS

*"But Jesus answered and said  
unto them, Ye do err, not know-  
ing the Scriptures."*

*Matthew 22: 29.*

**I**F WE KNOW OUR TIMES, we do not expect a general agreement with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

The Gospel, which is from above, is not favored by man, who is from beneath. You will hardly find any truth to which all agree. Every part of Revealed Truth is in turn attacked with the sharp weapons of science. And how, then, can the truth of the resurrection find favor in the eyes of those who wish to walk solely by the light of reason, and do not wish to recognize any higher light?

This is not strange.

Seemingly this truth conflicts with all common sense. Whoever does not want

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to accept the miraculous can find no place for the resurrection in his thinking. Though the greater part of the dead are buried, there are many others who have been destroyed in the flames, either in a burning building, or as martyrs at the stake. Others lie at the bottom of the sea, or have become the prey of sharks. Still others have been devoured by wild beasts. Does it not seem impossible that these wretched remains should arise to a new life, and have even a greater glory than they ever possessed on earth?

Indeed, our mind says this is impossible.

Already in the days of Jesus there were some in Israel who had broken with the hope of the resurrection of the body. The Sadducees were thoroughly practical people, or as we would say, the men of common sense, who were guided by the things seen and heard, and relegated everything beyond that to the realm of fairy tales. We read in the Gospel of Matthew (22: 23-33): "On that day there came to Him Sadducees, they that say that there *is no resurrection.*"

As far back as that day we find a complete denial of the resurrection. The Sad-

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ducees felt so sure of their case that they made the hope of the saints a subject of dispute with Jesus. You remember that they gave the case of a man who died childless and left his wife behind as widow. The deceased had, in this imaginary and wholly unthinkable case, no less than six brothers. According to Mosaic law the oldest brother was duty-bound to marry the widow. But this second husband also dies and leaves the woman a widow. She then marries the third brother, and this is repeated till she has married all seven. From this exaggeration you can surmise the evil intent of the Sadducees, when they ask: "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her."

But Jesus brushes their sophistry aside by saying: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven."

Marriage is only for this dispensation. Among other purposes God also instituted it for the propagation of the human race. But at the resurrection the number of the

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saved will be complete, as was the number of the angels at their creation. The angels did not have to marry to multiply, and there is no possibility of marriage among them. So shall it also be with humankind after the resurrection. In *that* respect they shall be like the angels of God in heaven.

Jesus gives some incidental teaching here on the nature of the resurrection-life. The Sadducees had too coarse a concept of it. They pictured it as a repetition of this earthly life, while Jesus taught them that the future life is of an altogether different kind, with a community life of its own.

The illustration of the Sadducees was not to the point, even though it was based on a command from Mosaic law. And as to the question of the resurrection itself, Jesus at once proves His contention that the Sadducees did not know the Scriptures. From the same books of Moses which they quote, he proves the resurrection. "Have ye not read," he asks, "that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not a God of the dead, but of the living."

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

Indeed, if God calls Himself the God of fathers who had long since died, then these dead must still live unto Him, and that is the conclusion—then those who are living as to their souls shall also live again as to their bodies.

Such Sadducees are still found in the world. There is a large number of rationalists who have broken with the hope of the resurrection. They often try, as the Sadducees, to make the hope of the resurrection appear ridiculous. The writer of these lines has met a gifted liberal preacher who could not conceive of a scientific man believing that all the bones and atoms of a corpse would be gathered together again to form a new body. He also had just as coarse a conception of the resurrection as the Sadducees, and the question was to the point whether he also did not know the Scriptures, since they have no trace of such crude ideas.

Besides those who altogether deny the resurrection there are others whose attitude is less offensive, but just as decisive as regards the matter in dispute. They also have their predecessors in the Bible. Paul speaks of them in his first epistle to



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Timothy as those who have made shipwreck of the faith, and names Hymeneus and Alexander, whom he delivered unto Satan in order that they might learn no more to blaspheme (I Timothy 1: 20). In his second epistle to Timothy he again mentions Hymeneus, and adds the name of a certain Filetus. They evidently were two influential errorists, for their word ate as a gangrene, something that can hardly be checked. The apostle tells us that their heresy consisted in claiming that the resurrection IS PASSED ALREADY, a doctrine with which they had overthrown the faith of some (II Timothy 2: 17, 18).

This is quite different from insolent denial.

In this case the heresy cloaks itself with the pretense of giving the correct Scriptural view. The followers of Hymeneus and Filetus spiritualized the statements of Scripture that mention the resurrection. In this way they would make their views acceptable to human reason. Does not Paul say in his epistle to the Ephesians that we are dead through trespasses and sins, but are made alive by faith? This transition from spiritual death into spir-

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itual life is according to them the resurrection. With the resurrection you are then not to think of something that will take place in the future. If you are a believer the resurrection has already taken place. You were in spiritual death, and now you are in fellowship with Christ.

Perfectly true. No one will deny it.

There is indeed a spiritual renewal that is even called in Scripture a resurrection. We read in Romans: "We are buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Death and burial lie behind us. But only spiritually speaking. We also call ourselves children of the resurrection because we have been obedient by faith to the call: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Ephesians 5: 14).

But this resurrection solely affects our soul.

Our body is outside of it.

Hymeneus and Filetus, and the Gnostics who accepted their error, and the many who today want to convert the

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physical resurrection into a spiritual one, must first of all prove their theory to be in harmony with the general teaching of the Bible.

**This is, however, a vain attempt.**

On this point the Word of God is perfectly clear.

All that are in the GRAVES shall hear the voice of the Lord, says the Bible, and not the souls of men, but their bodies only are in the graves.

Paul writes to the Romans (8:11): "And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Another decisive passage of Scripture is found in the epistle to the Philippians where we are told that God will fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the glorious body of Christ.

This shows that the spiritualizing of a few texts does not prove anything. The Word of God plainly teaches a bodily resurrection. We will admit at once that we cannot explain it. It is a truth that we be-

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lieve with the whole heart because God has revealed it in His Word. But this does not make the Christian hope absurd, for what is impossible with men, is possible with God. Why should not He who created man be able to recreate him from the same dust. The one is not easier or more difficult than the other. In days when we can see no help anywhere we love to talk hopefully of the omnipotence of God, for which nothing is too marvelous. Do not then limit that omnipotence when the resurrection of the body is discussed. Who seriously believes that God is omnipotent does not doubt that He who could call a whole world, of which nothing existed, into being, also has the power to form a new body from a handful of dust. The first miracle is really greater than the second. Let us, therefore, silence the Sadducee within us and outside of us with the word of Jesus: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."



THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE



III

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

*"Death is swallowed up in  
victory."*

*I Corinthians 15: 54.*

THE WORD OF GOD speaks decisively on the resurrection of the dead. In what way this will take place will be discussed later. What is plain at once is the fact that the devouring grave shall one day have to release its prey. This is the testimony of the Bible. And our voices should ring with conviction when we repeat this testimony.

For faith must ever conquer the facts of experience. We may not be reconciled to the thought that death shall be victor in the history of mankind. And that, not in the first place, because our salvation would then be incomplete, but because God would not receive the honor due Him, if death were the final victor.



## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

All life has come forth from the hand of God.

**This life found its climax in man.**

But sin brought man in the power of death.

This was the result of a Divine decree: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This death not only included spiritual and eternal death, but also bodily death. As Paul says: "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin."

Sin and death, therefore, belong together.

But sin and Satan also belong together.

**These two cannot be separated.**

Man sinned through the instigation of Satan, and is now in Satan's power. Satan may now lay his hand on every sinner and bring him in the power of death. Therefore the Bible calls the devil the one who has the power of death. He is the one who executes the decree of God on sin.

There is therefore a causal relation between Satan, sin, and death. That is the reason why any Israelite who touched a dead body became Levitically unclean. And that also explains why we instinctively

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shudder when we are in the presence of death. We feel that we are in the presence of a power that resists God and all life. The godless multitude may mock everything,— the Bible, the Church, the pious, and even curse the name of God and Christ. But in the presence of death almost every one is silent.

Death is, therefore, a conqueror.

Who can count his victories?

He ignores riches, health, and wisdom. The keenest thinker as well as the idiot must die.

But in this dying world God has sent His Son to destroy the works of the devil, and to reconcile sinners. As the Lamb of God Christ has borne away the sin of the world, so that sin can no longer testify against any one who is united to Christ by faith.

If sin is gone, death is gone, for death is the wages of sin. When Christ had paid for sin on the cross, death could not hold Him in its power. He arose in triumph from the grave, and at that moment the triumphal course of death was stopped, and the triumph of life began.

Satan has tried in every way to frustrate

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the saving work of Christ. As soon as He had accepted His Mediatorial office Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. He used a Simon Peter to keep Jesus from the way of the cross. He entered into Judas to accomplish his own base ends. He stirred up priests and people to choose Barabbas above Jesus. These were so many attempts to cause the work of Christ to fail and assure the continual triumph of death and the devil. But the God of life was stronger than the autocrat of death. The resurrection of Christ was proof that the head of the old serpent had been bruised.

The triumph of God was not yet complete, however.

The battle between death and life, sin and grace, was indeed decided in principle through the resurrection of Christ. But there remained a humankind over which death still maintained its power. God was not yet come to full glory as the God of life. And we instinctively feel that the time must come when the autocrat of death shall be put to shame before all men and angels, because his prey will be taken

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

from him and be put in the hands of Almighty God.

That day is not yet.

True, all who are united to Christ by faith feel the power of a heavenly life in their hearts as the prophecy of a glorious future.

True, when they fall asleep through Jesus, their souls enter heaven and enjoy with Christ an incorruptible, eternal life.

No doubt this is a victory of the God of life.

Yet something is still lacking.

The souls in eternity the prize of God!

The bodies in the grave the prey of Satan!

That would be but a partial triumph, unworthy of the God of life. If the Name of God is to be praised forever, it is necessary that our bodies also are delivered from death and the grave, and share life eternal.

Nothing must remain for death and its autocrat.

Everything must be surrendered to life and its Author.

Soul and body both must be God's to

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

praise Him forever for the redemption in Christ.

That must be the end of human history.

A lesser triumph would be unworthy of God.

The day must dawn when the word is fulfilled: "Death is SWALLOWED UP in victory! Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

## THE LAST TRUMPET



IV

THE LAST TRUMPET

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."*

*I Thessalonians 4:16.*

THE RESURRECTION of the dead and the second coming of Christ to judge the living and the dead are closely related to one another. If we have the main events that will usher in the coming of the Lord before our minds, we realize at once how difficult it is to form a mental picture of those last days which will climax the history of the world. The last period of this dispensation is one full of trouble and persecution. The power of the Antichrist will have come to its highest development, so that there will be no place left in society for those who confess Christ.



## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

The Church of Christ has endured severe persecutions in the course of the centuries. But what is awaiting her at the end of time is more terrible than anything she has ever endured. The apostasy among professing believers will be so great that the question came from the lips of our Savior: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

To prepare us for that future, and to strengthen our faith, Christ has called our attention to the signs of the times. In them we hear His approaching footsteps, while an unbelieving world sees in those events but so many fortuitous circumstances.

What are the precursors of His coming?

**Upheavals in the realm of nature.**

There will be earthquakes in many places, and not just sporadic, as they have occurred at all times.

**Upheavals in the world of men.**

The one nation shall war against the other. The kingdoms of the earth will try to destroy each other, with the evil results of famine and pestilence.

**Upheavals in the Church.**

The false prophets shall delude many,

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

and the love of many shall wax cold, while on the other hand the Gospel will be preached in all the world, a witness to the nations.

There is more darkness than light in this picture.

Yet this is but a prelude to the second coming itself.

The second coming will be accompanied by much more terrible catastrophes. The believers can await them without fear, but terror will fill the hearts of the godless, when they see the whole world crumble to pieces. Consider but for a moment what Jesus has said in His prophetic description: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together

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His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24).

Who can recognize our glorious world in this picture?

All light is gone. For Jesus is not speaking of a temporary sun eclipse. The sun has lost its light and is like sackcloth. As a result the moon has also lost its light-bringing power, and the stars whirl through space as so many lightless globes that have left their courses, for the powers of the heavens, the LAWS that hold everything in place, are broken, and prophesy the total destruction of our planet. All creation is loosed from its foundations, and the end can be nothing but complete collapse.

Egyptian darkness everywhere.

A trembling world, and breaking heavenly bodies.

And then, in the midst of the blackness of night, a gleam of light, a supernatural brilliance which reveals God's majesty and glory, as it was revealed in ancient days in the pillar of fire in the wilderness, and above the mercy-seat of the Ark in the tabernacle. It is the SIGN of the Son

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of man, the Man whom God has ordained to judge the world in righteousness.

In that world there are living and dead.

Actually many more dead than living.

As each generation lives approximately thirty years, you can readily see that those who rest in the graves far outnumber those that live in the day of the Son of man. The dead are soon forgotten here on earth, but God does not forget a single one. He sends out His angels to gather together the living, and also to raise the dead with the sound of the trumpet, and bring them with the living before His judgment-seat.

You know the naïve representation.

On canvas that often testifies of excellent art you can see throngs of angels with a TRUMPET on their lips. We have no objection to any efforts to picture an event that is actually beyond description. But, of course, it is simply a picture. Angels are spirits, and therefore do not use brazen trumpets. When Jesus speaks of a trumpet we are not to take this literally.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians we read that the Lord Jesus Himself shall

descend with a SHOUT, with the VOICE of the archangel, and with the TRUMP of God. And in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians we also read that the dead will rise at the last TRUMP. We find the sound of the trumpet, the shout, and the voice of the archangel used interchangeably. They, therefore, refer to the same thing, just as do the other figures of Jesus when he says in John's Gospel that the hour cometh when the dead shall hear the VOICE of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. It is all figurative, just as we read in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins of a loud CRY: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," though in that place it is not said from whom that loud call proceeds.

We must evidently think of a reverberating sound that pierces everything, so that even the graves open, and the dead arise. Of course, the use of the figure of a trumpet is not arbitrary. The trumpet was used in the Revelations of God in the Old Dispensation. When God gave the law on Sinai we read that the sound of a TRUMPET was heard, which is distinguished from God's own voice.

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Did God possibly use some overwhelming forces of nature to produce this sound, as we sometimes hear a storm shriek, moan, or roar? Or have the legions of angels that were present at the announcing of the Decalog brought forth this swelling trumpet-sound? We do not know. In any case, its purpose was to announce the coming of the King of kings, as in ancient times a herald with his trumpet announced the coming of his monarch. And at the same time the people were called to appear before God.

The events on Sinai led to the use of the trumpet in the services of the Temple. It was used to call to war, to assemble the people, or to break up camp. But we are to think in connection with our subject especially of the use of the trumpet when the year of Jubilee would be ushered in. Then we have a glorious prophecy here. The second coming of Christ may bring terror to the godless, but for God's saints it will be the beginning of their complete redemption, the beginning of perfect peace and liberty in the Kingdom of Peace. It will be the LAST trumpet, as we may say that the FIRST was heard on

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

Sinai. That was the first Divine Revelation to the whole people of God. And with the Second Coming of Christ we will have the last revelation of God through Jesus Christ. It will close the history of the **world and of the Church.**

With the sound of the last trumpet there arises a movement among the dead. The souls of the saints who had died were up to that moment in the Father's house with its many mansions. Now they are reunited with their bodies by the power of God. And as Lazarus arose at the voice of the Lord to return to this earthly life, so the dead will arise on the last day to **enter eternal life.**

**All the graves are opened.**

Also that immeasurable ocean grave as we read in the last book of the Bible. What a comfort for widow and orphan whose husband and father rests on the bottom of the sea, and who can never visit the grave of their dear one! These dead sleep their last deep sleep in a grave no one can find. But God knows their resting-place. The sea is His for He made it, and His hands have formed the dry land.

THEY THAT REMAIN ALIVE





V

THEY THAT REMAIN ALIVE

*"We that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up."*

*I Thessalonians 4: 17.*

WITH the sound of the last trumpet, at the second coming of Christ on the clouds, all the dead shall arise. It makes no difference whether they have died upon their beds and have had an honorable burial, or whether they have died in shipwreck, or have been consumed in the flames. Even the dead who because of their faith have been cast before the wild beasts and were devoured will not be an exception. What is more, even the unbelievers who have despised Christ, and the heathen who have never heard of His Name, shall arise from the grave. No human being will be missing, for the difference between believers and unbelievers is not found in the resurrection, but in the destiny to which they are raised up.

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Naturally the question arises as to what shall take place with those who are alive at the second coming of Christ.

For Christ shall not come to a depopulated world.

On the contrary, the unholy life of the world will have reached its apex in the days of the Antichrist, which life the last book of the Bible pictures to us under the figure of a God-hating Babylon. Then there will be a period of prosperity as the world has never seen before. Then humankind will have reached its highest development. Business and labor shall flourish, and men will wallow in sensuality and sin. In that world there will still be a little flock of true believers. And all who were Christians but in name will have fallen away.

As soon as a sacrifice must be made in the service of God the chaff is separated from the wheat. But those who have found their salvation in Christ will remain true in all tribulation. And, therefore, there will be a group of men and women in that great and terrible day of the Lord who have not denied His name, even though they have been deprived of their

daily bread, and have been spurned in human society as so many pariahs.

What shall take place with them on that day when all graves are opened?

Some have thought that those who remain will first die, to be raised again immediately. For we read in the epistle to the Hebrews that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment. Some have, therefore, made the incorrect conclusion that every human being must go through death. But they forget that the apostle is here speaking of the usual course of things among men, and is not speaking of the unusual events that will take place at the close of history.

Scripture plainly teaches that man can enter eternity in another way than through death. Enoch has not experienced death, for God took him out of this earthly life to crown his walk with God. Nor did Elijah go through the valley of shadows, but was taken from the side of Elisha into heaven in a storm. These two examples show that death is not the only way for men to enter eternity.

We can speak with assurance on this matter.

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Paul treats this subject fully in the first epistle to the Corinthians. He does indeed write only of the believers, but as there is a resurrection for the godly and ungodly dead both, so there must be a change for the godly and ungodly living before they enter eternity on the day of Christ's appearance.

How does Paul describe this change?

He calls it a mystery, a thing that was not revealed till then, but which the Lord had now taught him. "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be **CHANGED**. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

The dead shall be raised.

The living shall be **CHANGED**.

And this change shall not be gradual,

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as the development of a rose from its bud, but suddenly, and completely; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

This need not surprise us. All kinds of changes take place in nature that would seem unbelievable. Who recognizes the black coal in a brilliant diamond? And yet under certain favorable circumstances this change has taken place in the process of ages. And why should we then smile about a change of our coarse bodies into a finer organism that is destined for another mode of existence, and must live in another sphere?

The idea itself is not absurd.

There are possibilities, potentialities, in the human body that never come to development here, but which can reveal themselves in another sphere. In this connection we may think of the glorification of Christ on the mount. Christ was indeed the Son of God, but He took upon Him the very nature of man, though without sin. On the mount His human body was changed. His face shone as the sun, and an effulgence of light shone forth from Him, so that even His clothing became a gleaming white as no fuller on earth can

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whiten them. This was something unusual, we grant that at once. But it proves that the human body is capable of change, and that God can make the change that shall characterize the resurrected body take place in a moment with those that still remain alive.

Paul also tells us something of the nature of this change.

The mortal shall put on immortality.

Our earthly tabernacle is mortal and corruptible. Even though we become seventy or eighty years old, our body can not last forever, for it is subject to death and decay. The great "change" that shall take place on the last day will be just this, that the mortal body becomes immortal. The condition in which it shall exist will be for the believers one of salvation and glory, while for the unbelievers it will be one of misery and abhorrence. But in this respect they will be alike, that both will have an IMMORTAL body. That is necessary for the person who goes from a temporal into an eternal sphere. Paul had just made the statement, speaking of the believers, that "flesh and blood", that is, our present body in its present state,

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cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, because the mortal and the immortal do not belong together. Therefore the great "change" for the body will consist in this, that the mortal will be made immortal, to prepare the body for an eternal existence, **be it one of weal or woe.**

What a vista unfolds before our eyes!

A whole world of living human beings!

A whole earth without any dead, without any cemetery, without any grave that has remained closed, but instead a teeming multitude of people, of whom some have just come from the grave, and others **have just been changed!**

These shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

In I Thessalonians 4 Paul comforts those that mourn over their dear ones who have died in Christ. His readers hoped to live till the second coming of Christ. What would be their experience? Would they who lived till that day have an advantage over those who had died? No, says the apostle. The dead will be behind in nothing. **"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the**



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Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

All the living taken up together in the air.

Taken up out of this world that is being rocked to its foundations, while the heavenly bodies collide, and burst apart, as a prelude to the world's renewal.

All taken up "to meet the Lord", to appear before His judgment-seat. Translated from an unstable earth into a heavenly sphere where the last judgment will likely be held!

A RESURRECTION BODY



## VI

### A RESURRECTION BODY

*"How are the dead raised?"  
I Corinthians 15: 35.*

AFTER giving an exposition of the change that shall take place with the believers who are living at the second coming of Christ, we will again consider the dead who on that day have been for months, years, and ages in the grave.

We have no doubt whatever that they shall arise.

The Word of God speaks very plainly here. But we would like to know some of the details of the resurrection. The question arises by what power the dead shall be raised. A question that Paul answers decisively in his epistle to the Romans, by saying that it is God who quickeneth the dead.

Every one is not satisfied with this answer, however.

There are a number of philosophically-

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mind men who do indeed believe in a resurrection, but give an erroneous explanation of it. They base their teaching on certain portions of Scripture. The Scriptures speak in a twofold way of the resurrection. Sometimes we read that the dead are raised, and then again that they themselves arise. Christ says repeatedly in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel: "And I will raise him up at the last day." But Paul writes in his first epistle to the Thessalonians that they that are fallen asleep in Christ shall rise first, while after that the living believers shall be changed.

We feel the difference in viewpoint at once.

If the dead are raised there is some power outside of them that awakes them from the deep sleep of death while they themselves remain passive. But if they arise, they are active, they work, for arising is not some lot that we undergo, but a deed that we transact.

Many ignore what Scripture says about *being raised*, and emphasize what it says about *arising*, to prove their contention that the resurrection is a work of man himself. They rightly maintain that every

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one who believes in Jesus at once receives life eternal in his soul. Jesus Himself has declared this, and indeed, all believers have, even while here on earth, gone from death into life.. This eternal life does not die in the moment of death. The soul takes this life with it into heaven. But now the error comes. Some maintain that the soul constantly sends forth power to the body that it has left behind in the grave. For that body belongs to the soul. And as a result of the constant transfer-ence of power from the soul to the body, the body again begins to live. The soul has given its eternal life to the body, with the result that the body rises from the grave.

This theory is nothing but a cunning fable.

It is at once disproved by the fact that then only the believers would arise, and no unbelievers. For the soul of an unbeliever, when it has gone into eternity, has eternal death instead of eternal life. No life-giving power can therefore go from such a soul to its body. And as Scripture plainly teaches that all the dead "arise", for this word is used for both the friends

and the enemies of God,—it is simply impossible to maintain this alluring theory before the judgment-seat of God's Word. Scripture does not teach that the soul makes the dead alive, but that God does such.

We may not, therefore, emphasize the "rising" at the expense of the "being raised". We show reverence for the Word of God if we also note the passive element in the resurrection, the "being raised". Both expressions, which are also used of the resurrection of Christ, give us a complete picture of the resurrection. The "raising" from the dead is altogether the work of God. It consists in bringing life to the body by reuniting it with the soul so that they shall forever be united together, and never again be separated by death. But if our body is again made alive through the creative word of God, then we are able by that new power to hearken to the voice of Christ, and arise from the dust. In the Gospel of John Jesus first says that He will RAISE the dead, and then, that they shall GO FORTH, they themselves; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have

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done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

**It is God who giveth life to the dead.**

We repeat this confession because some professing believers do not do full justice to this truth. They will give an analogy from plant life in their explanation of the resurrection. They point to the fact that you can cut off a plant at the root, but in the root there will still be a GERM OF LIFE, and it is quite probable that this germ of life will soon develop again into a beautiful plant. Is it not reasonable to think, they ask, that the human body will have a similar experience? In death the body that flourished as a flower of the field is cut down, but if some germ of life remains, no matter how small, then the resurrection has been made plain to our reason. The hidden germ would then spring forth and produce a new human body, and this would then be the resurrection.

**But is this really a resurrection from THE DEAD?**

Take the germ as small as possible; so small as to be invisible to the naked eye, as so many are. Yet there is LIFE hidden in it. Call it but a possibility of life,



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if you want to. Yet a germ is not dead like a stone from which no life can ever come forth. But our body, when it dies, is dead. The wages of sin is death. And that statement contradicts the theory that there is in the dead body a hidden germ from which a new body can arise. Such a germ would have to be indestructible; not only impervious to decay in the bosom of the earth, but also impervious to fire, since many martyrs were burned to death, and many people have had their bodies cremated. Yet they also were human beings who shall arise from death.

The advocates of this germ theory base their assertions on what Paul writes in his first epistle to the Corinthians. He does indeed speak there of a seed that is cast into the earth and dies, and then shoots forth again in blade and ear, and is as it were a resurrection from the dead. But it is not the purpose of the apostle to make the resurrection evident to our minds. He does not even speak of a germ that later shoots forth again. He simply attacks the unbelievers who held the resurrection to be impossible. These fools, as he calls them, he sets aright. Let them

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notice what takes place in the field. There they can see that decay and corruption is the way to bring about new life, and would God then be unable to create a new, resurrection body from a body that has decayed?

That is the point of comparison. If Paul had sought the similarity in a germ we would have to come to the absurd conclusion that from one dead body many resurrection bodies would spring forth, as out of one seed an ear comes forth containing thirty, sixty, or a hundred grains. We prefer to believe the plain expressions of Scripture, and ascribe the resurrection to the almighty power of God, Who doeth wonders. It is God who giveth life to the dead.

He works this power THROUGH CHRIST, however.

Very often we read in Scripture that the work of the resurrection is ascribed to Christ, although not excluding the Father or the Holy Spirit. Just bear in mind the word of Jesus: "And I will raise him up at the last day." Alongside of such statements we read that God the Father will raise us by His power, and that we shall be

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made alive by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.

Christ is, therefore, the resurrection and the life.

Were He but the author of the resurrection of the *believers*, we would find nothing strange in that message. For the resurrection unto salvation is part of the saving work that the Father has given Him to do. But it seems strange to us, at a first glance, to read that He is also the author of the resurrection of the *unbelievers*, since they are not members of His body, and therefore have no share in His redemption. You can understand this if you keep the purpose of the resurrection before your mind. That purpose is to place all mankind before God's judgment-seat, for the living and the dead must all be judged. And as God has given this judgment to the Son, it is indeed God who giveth life to the dead, but He works His almighty power through the SON, whom He has ordained to be the judge of all.

## IDENTITY



## VII

### IDENTITY

*"So also is the resurrection of the dead."*

*I Corinthians 15: 42.*

**WE HAVE SEEN** that we shall all be raised from the dead on the last day. This shall take place by the power of God through Christ. We shall then appear before Him in judgment, with those who have remained alive.

The question now arises as to the similarity between the resurrection body and our present body. May we believe in their identity, notwithstanding the differences to which Scripture points? Will the resurrection body be in essence the same as our present mortal body, even though there be a difference in qualities?

Speaking abstractly, we could assume that when the graves are opened we shall receive a wholly new body, in every respect different from our present earthly

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tabernacle. God is almighty. Nothing can hinder Him to create a new thing with a single word, either from the dust of the earth, or from some finer matter that may be found in the universe. There have been, and still are, believers who think that the resurrection body will come from heaven, or that the soul will weave about itself a material covering that has nothing in common with our earthly body.

If that conception were true we could hardly speak of a resurrection. What has become dust does not in that case arise, but something new takes its place. And there is no conceivable reason why Scripture should then speak of a coming forth from the grave. It would be more correct to speak of a departure from heaven where the soul of the believer dwells.

In fact, there would then be no resurrection.

Our soul would then appear in ANOTHER body. We not only consist of a soul, however, but also of a body for which the soul is adapted. And if WE are to arise and are to live again in this earthly sphere, our soul must necessarily receive

its own body back again,— otherwise WE would but partly arise.

The Word of God leaves no doubt on this subject.

When Paul writes that the body is sown in corruption and is raised in incorruption, it is clear as daylight that the last body is the same as the first. And if you wish further proof think of Christ. After His resurrection He appears to His disciples. They do not immediately recognize Him, but think He is an apparition, some spirit. Our Lord tries in every way to prove to them that He Himself is in their midst,— the same one whom they had seen dying on the cross. Not only the same person as to His spirit, but also as to His body, though that had now changed qualities. For He says: “See my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.” He even takes a piece of fish and some honey, and eats it before their eyes, in order that they should not doubt the identity of their dead and resurrected Lord.

But this identity must be understood in its right sense.



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It proves that the same body that was entrusted to the bosom of the earth arises on the last day, vivified with new and eternal life. But that does NOT involve that we shall arise from the grave exactly as we have been laid in it. That would be a disheartening thought for many. We often meet deformed people, who in their childhood days were often plagued by their playmates. Besides, the invalids are without number. Then we find that the one is deaf, another blind, a third a consumptive, and a fourth has a weak heart. These are all defects that do not belong to the human body as such, but are the result of the curse upon man for sin. Then there are many who have been maimed in war, or in industrial accidents. And then we must also be reminded of the babes who, if they were children of the covenant, went from their cradle to glory, and of whom we would then have to expect that they would arise from the grave as weak and helpless as when they died.

In addition the Word of God teaches us that we shall one day be perfect on a new earth. Perfection excludes all that is weak, and sick, and immature. Imper-

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fection does not harmonize with that new order of being. There is place only for a new mankind which, as to its body also, reveals the nobility of the image of God, and develops all its talents and energies.

This also sets aside the theory that the resurrection body will be composed of the same elements as the body that was laid in the grave. Of course, God would be able to gather together all the particles of dust to which the body has disintegrated, and unite them in such a way that a body is formed that is the exact reproduction of the old body in size, weight and appearance. But the question is not what is possible with God, but what He has revealed in His Word. There we read that flesh and blood, that is, the earthly body as it was laid aside in the grave, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. That teaches, at least, that the resurrection body is not just some second edition of the first mortal body, even though it is the same in **ESSENCE**.

But does that not nullify the identity?

At a first glance it might seem so, but if we study the matter, we will find that this is not so. Consider your own body

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for a moment in its present condition. It has a definite size and weight, and is composed of matter, water, lime and minerals. Does this body remain unchanged thruout your whole life? No. It goes through a metabolic process of which you are not even conscious. Every seven years, we are told, all the elements of your body change. You can see the results of this process most plainly if you compare a child with a greybeard. The component parts of the body have often been replaced by other, but similar parts. But no matter how great the difference in weight, size, and appearance may be, no one doubts the identity of the bodies.

In ESSENCE it is always the same body.

You can continue along this line, from the infant to the greybeard, and through death to the resurrection body. This will be perfectly identical with the mortal body as far as its ESSENCE is concerned. But that does not mean that size and weight will be alike. Nor does it mean that it will be composed of exactly the same elements as the mortal body. It simply means that the elements will be similar,

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and that these elements will come forth from the mortal body, something that makes their quantity of minor importance.

A simple illustration can make this plain.

If you compare the creeping caterpillar with the glorious butterfly, no one, who did not know this, would think that these wholly different creatures are essentially the same. But we know that the caterpillar becomes a cocoon, and the cocoon a butterfly. It is ever the same body, yet the difference is so great that a child shuns a caterpillar and tries to catch a butterfly. This is but a comparison, but it is an image of the resurrection, since notwithstanding all change in form the identity remains.

Our resurrection body will not be like to our present body in every respect, but will be similar. Whatever change may take place, each person receives again the body fitting for his personality, and through which he expresses himself. The individuality that characterizes us now, and differentiates us from each other, will also be ours in the state of glory. If all people would become alike, the life in glory

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would be a poorer life than life here on earth with its rich variety.

The various types of people will be found again after the resurrection, types of race and tribe. The yellow race is altogether different from the black and white. It is absurd to think that God would wipe out all these differences that are based on His own creation. The last book of the Bible constantly mentions nations, tongues, and peoples. Every race will retain what pertains to its essential characteristics.

The same will no doubt be true of each individual. There is difference in build, in carriage, in movement, in form, and in delineation of face and head. We need not fear that all these differences shall disappear. With MY persononality belongs ONE face, with YOURS another, through which the soul can express itself. We may suppose that the sound of our voice will be similar to what it is now. Nothing so reveals our individuality as our voice. Build of body, appearance, face, and voice will be renewed and glorified, but not altered. Without any difficulty we will be able to recognize one another in that new world.

## SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE



## VIII

### SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

*"Who shall fashion anew the  
body of our humiliation."*

*Philippians 3:20.*

IT HAS BECOME EVIDENT that we need not doubt the identity of the resurrection body with the mortal body. The two bodies will be essentially the same, but that does not mean that they both will have exactly the same qualities. In that respect there will surely be difference. It will be worth our while to consider these differences.

The two bodies will be alike in essence.  
They will differ in their qualities.

This is not an arbitrary distinction. We often find this distinction in nature round about us. Water, snow, ice, and vapor are in essence the same. With a few degrees of frost or heat the one changes into the other, and even though it seems to have become something else, it remains water.



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You can easily change the snow or ice back to water again, and you have but to condense the vapor and you have drops of water.

In that case you have similarity in essence.

But the qualities are different.

You sink in the water, and—the ice bears you up. The snowflakes descend, and the vapor rises.

Other such changes can be mentioned. Under favorable circumstances a bit of calcium can become a beautiful pearl, and a piece of coal a diamond. You might call this change in appearance a change from the lesser to the greater, or better still, a transition from a state of humiliation to a state of glory.

These words are taken from Scripture. In the Bible you find the earthly Jerusalem described as an ordinary city with houses and palaces. Its beauty consisted in this, that the Lord dwelt in the Holy of holies on Mount Zion. Now place alongside of this city the picture of the glorified Jerusalem, of which the earthly was a type and prophecy. In ESSENCE it is in both cases the same city where God tabernacled. But

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in its qualities the heavenly city differs greatly from its earthly type. The streets are of pure gold, clear as crystal; the foundations glitter with precious stones, and the gates are as pearls in their quiet luster, all details that picture the glory of the coming age.

Such a change will also take place on the last day, a change from the common to the noble, from the humiliated to the glorified. Paul states this emphatically in his epistle to the Philippians. He declares that we are awaiting our Savior from heaven, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His GLORY, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself (3: 20, 21).

At a first glance these words might give us the impression that they tell us much about the qualities of our future body. If it is to be like the glorified body of Christ, we have but to note what His body was like after His resurrection. He has appeared several times to His disciples. We have but to note these appearances to

have a fairly definite picture of our own resurrection body.

But we are disappointed. The results of our investigation are meager. There is a veil of mystery over the period between Christ's resurrection and ascension. Even the appearances themselves are mysterious, though they are attested by many witnesses, at one time by even five hundred.

Where was the resurrected Christ when He did not appear to His friends? Did He then enter the invisible world to appear but momentarily to His disciples to encourage them, and to strengthen their faith? Or did He still belong to our earthly sphere? And, if so, where did He then dwell? Scripture does not answer these questions since they are of no importance for our faith. The Bible makes plain that Jesus arose, but how He dwelt on earth during these forty days, on that subject the Gospel sheds but little light. We are given the impression that Christ lived on the border of the visible and invisible world, and therefore made a mysterious impression on those who beheld Him. But that also means that His appearances give but little light on our subject.

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There are, however, a few details that we should consider. We have seen that He had a real body, and was not some apparition, as the disciples at first thought. A spirit has no flesh and bones. He declared, a statement that implies that He did have them. He even let them handle Him to convince them of the fact that His was a real body. But now we have already come to the end of our investigation.

We know nothing further about the condition of His body. We do read that He ate food before them, but that does not mean that the resurrection body must be nourished with food and drink. For Jesus did not eat to nourish His body, but simply to prove that He was not a spiritual apparition. The same is true of His appearance at the Sea of Tiberius. He there eats with His disciples, but that does not prove that He needed food. We get the impression that he prepared the food for His disciples to refreshen them in order to encourage them for the days when they would be fishers of men, and would often have to labor in vain on the sea of human-kind.

Nor can we learn much from His ap-

pearance to the disciples in Jerusalem. It is true that we read that He suddenly appeared in their midst while the doors were shut. The Lutherans think that His body was deified, and could therefore go through closed doors as the light enters through the windows, and sound pierces the walls. But we can hardly accept this view on Biblical grounds. Jesus' body was created, even as ours. And it is up to the Lutherans to make plain to us how a creature can become deified. They erase the difference between creature and Creator, and proceed along the lines of Pantheism, which abolishes the dualism between God and world, spirit and matter, and thereby contradicts the Word of God. In fact, in this narrative we read nothing of piercing a closed door. We simply read that He appeared suddenly in the midst of the disciples while the doors were shut. Evidently He opened the door by His miraculous power, without first knocking, in order to surprise them with His joyful greeting.

Nor can we deduce anything from the fact that the men of Emmaus did not at once recognize Him, but took Him for a

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stranger. For we read that their eyes were held. Divine power affected their sight. We might compare it to the power that affected the sight of Elisha's servant, who could only see the fiery horses and chariots on the mountain, after God had opened his eyes.

We know therefore but little of the condition and qualities of the resurrection body of Jesus, and of our own. We are assured that it was a real body, but different from the earthly body, for Jesus does not speak of flesh and blood, but of "flesh and bones". Jesus also seems to have been able to go from place to place much more suddenly than during His earthly ministry. We read nothing of His need of food or drink, nor of weariness and the need of sleep. It is evident that those days were a period of transition, for when He says to Mary: "I go up to My Father and your Father, to My God and to your God," He implies that He no longer belongs to this earthly sphere, though He did not as yet belong completely to the heavenly sphere either. He was, as it were, on the way to heaven, and

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seems to have been in an intermediate state during these forty days.

That gives us the following suggestion.

On the last day our bodies will arise, but they will probably not be glorified at once, even though they will no longer be subject to all kinds of ailments as formerly. It is contrary to the Word of God to think that we shall appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ in a glorified body. This would be an anticipation of the sentence of the Judge. Scripture teaches that the glory comes after the judgment. As Christ first received His mysterious resurrection body, and later received His glory after the ascension, so we also shall be raised with an immortal body that will be like, and yet different, from our earthly body. After judgment has been pronounced, this immortal body shall be glorified, made like unto the body of Jesus, a glorification on which His appearances shed but little light.

Such seems to us to be the view of Scripture. We shall not try to remove the veil any farther, but will limit ourselves to what Scripture says about the GLORIFIED body.

DIFFERENT IN WHAT RESPECT?





## IX

### DIFFERENT IN WHAT RESPECT?

*"It is raised a spiritual body."  
I Corinthians 15: 44.*

IN OUR PREVIOUS STUDIES we have come to the conclusion that our resurrection body shall be identical with our earthly body, but shall differ from it in its qualities. We also surmised that the complete glorification of the bodies of the resurrected believers will not take place till after judgment. Before the Judgment-seat the decision is simply given who belong to the sheep and who to the goats. The damned do not appear before the Tribunal in the gruesome bodies that are fitting for the place of eternal abhorrence, nor do the believers appear there in the glorified bodies that are fitting for the beauty of the new earth under the new heaven. This twofold condition can hardly precede the final sentence, but seems to follow it. For it will be from His Judg-

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ment-seat that Christ will send the one to the realm of darkness, and the other to the realm of light.

There the redeemed shall dwell on the new earth in glorified bodies. Paul writes about this in I Corinthians 15. He tells us in what respect the glorified body will be different from our present earthly body.

He compares the burying of the dead with the sowing of seed in the field. The dead grain is not lost, but shall arise to a new life. That new life is like the old life as far as its essence is concerned, but the golden blade with the full ear is much more beautiful than the insignificant seed that was entrusted to the earth. In that way God will bring forth the resurrection body from the body that was laid in the grave. Though these bodies are identical, there will be a fourfold difference. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." With this fourfold contrast Paul does not solely refer to the condition of our body at the moment when it is buried. That is indeed

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the point of departure in his description, but he also wishes to give us a picture of our whole bodily existence on this side of the grave, in order that he may compare it with our existence, not only at the moment of our resurrection, but throughout all eternity.

The first contrast is that of corruption and incorruption.

The apostle must necessarily begin with that contrast.

When can the corruption of our bodies be seen more plainly than in the hour when they are subjected to the power of death? In our cool climate we may keep the earthly remains for a day or two. But the signs of decay are soon evident. We usually notice them even before the body is lowered in the grave. The smell of death pervades the rooms. And when we return from the cemetery we think with a shudder of what takes place beneath the sod.

The earthly body is therefore not immortal. Sometimes it seems so in the days of vigorous health. Yet we see that it shrivels with the passing years. Age is undermining it, and is the messenger that tells of the decay that takes place in the

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grave, a decay that cannot be stopped with any embalming fluid.

How different the resurrection body shall be!

It belongs to the things that man's mind has not conceived. Who can have a definite idea of a flower that never withers; of a beauty that never fades; of strength that never diminishes; of a head that never becomes grey; of an eye that never becomes dim; of an ear that never becomes deaf; of hands that never tremble; of knees that never become feeble; of a stride that is ever powerful, and a carriage ever firm; of a body without spot or wrinkle; of an existence in which we will enjoy perpetual youth, with a body as glorious as that of man in Paradise when he came forth from the hand of God as the crown of creation?

The second contrast is that of dishonor and glory.

Our present body has no royal appearance. It has, instead, the stamp of dishonor and humiliation. Vain people will smile at this statement. Is our body not a work of art? Is it sometimes not entrancing? There are so many beautiful

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faces that make a profound impression on any beholder. And does a mirror lie? Many a graceful young woman cannot and will not admit that her external appearance is far from perfect.

That men cannot believe that our present bodies have the stamp of dishonor is because they have never seen man in paradise, before sin came. If they could compare themselves with our first parents, it would be easy for them to admit the truth that all honor and glory is well-nigh gone from our physical life, and that we are nothing but ruins which reveal only the remains of our original glory.

There is no reason to be proud of a body that is subject to all manner of ailments, and loses its freshness and charm soon after its youthful years are past. The hidden diseases are legion. Even people who are supposed to be a hundred per cent healthy have in their bodies the germs of manifold sicknesses, which reveal themselves sooner or later. Death courses through our veins when we have just entered the threshold of life. Our bodies have all kinds of weaknesses. Heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys are often

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abnormal without our being conscious of that fact. And no matter how long we may manage to live with the aid of science, at last the tabernacle breaks down, and we are carried to the grave.

Praise God, we go through the grave into glory!

After we have risen from the dust we will be able to see what a wretched but we inhabited during our earthly life. Then we will have a perfect body shining in the luster of eternal life. You find a dim picture of this glory in Moses when he descended the mount after being in the presence of God. Then his face shone with such glory that he had to cover it before the people. It will be such a change that we can hardly form any idea of it.

The human body is composed of elements that can be ennobled. We are able to improve flowers, plants, and seeds, but when God improves our bodies in the resurrection it will mean a glorification. It is not simply figurative language, but a portrayal of reality, when Jesus says of the redeemed: "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

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The third contrast is one of weakness and power.

Our present body is weak from the cradle to the grave. We see the light of life as helpless little creatures. Were we not cherished by a mother's care, our life would depart soon after we were born. In the course of time we learn to help ourselves, and may even become athletes. But even then we are weak. Splendid muscles are no armor against death.

After the resurrection weakness makes place for power.

A powerful body that can run without becoming weary, and walk without becoming faint. A powerful brain that is a fit instrument for our thinking, so that the flight of our thoughts is not checked through any weariness of mind. Powerful activity, for our energy will never be exhausted.

In our present life we must leave much undone because we lack the necessary strength to finish our task. But no weakness shall hinder us when we have our resurrection bodies. All our latent powers will then develop. We will never fail in any task. We will never stop halfway in



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our service of the Lord. Because we then can do all things, we will be kings.

The last contrast, and one on which all the others are founded, is the one of a natural and spiritual body.

"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." With the natural body Paul means a soul body, a body that lives, and is ruled by the soul. Even in this earthly life the Spirit of God works in our soul. He enlightens our mind, frees our will, sanctifies our feelings. We are subject to the rule of God's Spirit. But we know also that the royal sway of the Spirit is checked by our sinful, natural body, for we have constantly a struggle between spirit and flesh.

This cannot last throughout all eternity. The Spirit of God cannot be satisfied with the weak relation that now exists between Him and our soul. He claims the human body, in order that it may be a fit instrument for His use, as a talented player can elicit the most beautiful tones from a fine organ.

This triumph of the Spirit of God is reserved for the resurrection day. The recalcitrant "natural" body arises as a

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“spiritual” body. It will not be an eternal, half-material body, for that would not be a body. A material being simply cannot be a purely spiritual being. But the resurrection body is called “spiritual” because it is filled with the Spirit of God who controls it through the soul. And THIS body will be completely subject to the Spirit. It will obey every impulse of the Spirit, and in that way God will be glorified in us, both as to body and soul.



LIKE THE ANGELS



X

LIKE THE ANGELS

*"They are equal unto the  
angels."*

*Luke 20:36.*

**I**N ADDITION to the four points of difference that we discussed in the last chapter, there is still another that we must consider.

When we discussed the denial of the resurrection we quoted the paragraph that records the debate between Jesus and the Sadducees on the resurrection. They tried to show the folly of faith in a resurrection by giving the fictitious example of a woman who had had seven husbands. Then they put the question whose wife she would be in the resurrection since all seven brothers had married her.

In His answer Jesus calls their supposition an ERROR. The Sadducees showed by their question that they had a wholly incorrect idea of the future life on the

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new earth. Then Jesus draws a contrast between the present and the future age. He declares: "The sons of THIS world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to THAT world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are EQUAL UNTO THE ANGELS; and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20).

Like the angels,—that is the prophecy of the glorious future awaiting us.

If these words stood isolated from the context it would be possible for a pious fantasy to draw all kinds of conclusions in regard to the resurrection life. This has, in fact, been done. In many books you can still read that in the future age we shall be as spotlessly holy as the angels of God; that we then shall no longer have a somber life, as at present, but shall shine as the stars, as Daniel states of the faithful ministers. Then they draw the analogy that we will ever be ready to serve the Lord, as the winged angels fly at His bidding.

No doubt these are beautiful truths, but

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Jesus is not referring to them in this paragraph.

Like the angels.

Another conclusion that we may not make from this statement is that our existence will be purely spiritual, as is that of the angels. There is never a change of kind in anything that God has created. Everything that He has made was very good from its beginning. There was no room for any later corrections. And as He has created the angels as pure spirits, the animals as pure matter, without spirit, and man from spirit and matter both, they will each remain forever what they are from the beginning. An angel can no more become man than man can become an angel. Whatever change may take place, they remain essentially what they are.

We must therefore note the context to get the correct explanation of these words of Jesus. The Sadducees spoke about married life as we know it here on earth. When they therefore heard a discussion about the bodily resurrection, they viewed the resurrection life as a repetition of our present earthly life, be it in a nobler form.



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According to their view the old relations would be continued. People would marry. Marriage would be blessed with children. The family would gradually increase. The marriage laws of Israel had as one purpose to keep a tribe from dying out. And since they base their conclusions on Israelitish law, they take the supposition that life in the resurrection age would be as life in this present age.

If this were so, there would indeed be many a perplexing problem in eternity. We may ignore the absurd supposition of the Sadducees. But how many widowers are there not who marry again? How many widows have not had more than one husband in all honor and virtue? If all the earthly relations were repeated after the resurrection, there is no doubt that many a one would be placed in an incongruous situation as to a former husband or wife.

Jesus sweeps away all these earthly views.

In this respect the resurrection life is of another *kind* than life here below. On earth people marry. That is God's law. God brings man and wife together. God

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could have created all humankind at once. He created all the angels at once. Their number was at once complete from the beginning. Not one was ever taken away by death, nor was a single one ever added by birth. Had it pleased Him, He could have done the same thing with mankind.

But such did not please Him.

It was His will that mankind should develop from one pair of human beings. As a spreading tree with its many leaves, blossoms, and fruits, develops from a single seed, so the human race was to develop slowly from its first parents. For that purpose the Lord has instituted marriage between one man and one woman. But this process will not be endless. God has decided on a definite number of human beings. Though the one generation succeeds the other, the time is coming when the last person shall have been born. But till that time the institution of marriage must be maintained.

The final number will have been reached at the second coming of Christ. When the resurrection age has come the marriage relation will therefore necessarily cease. A new mode of living shall then

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have come. Humankind, that shall then be partly in glory, and partly in damnation, shall no more reproduce itself. Mankind will have reached its destiny. God's great work is finished. There will be no room for marriage and increase in numbers among mankind, and in THAT respect we shall be as the angels.

Various conclusions have been drawn from this fact.

Some theologians have defended the theory that all distinction of sex would be removed after the resurrection.

Then the new earth would be inhabited with sexless beings. They believed that the Word of God gave a sound basis for this theory. In the first place they appealed to the word of Jesus that we shall be like the angels. The angels are sexless, since they neither marry nor are given in marriage. Their conclusion was that therefore there would be no distinction of sex between human beings after the resurrection.

Of course, this conclusion is not valid.

Angels are spirits. Human beings have a body. And as sex is partly determined by our physical structure, we cannot com-

pare men and angels in this case. They are beings that differ in kind.

Another argument of some ancient theologians to substantiate this theory is just as invalid. They assumed that because Paul teaches that in Christ there is neither male nor female, all distinction of sex would be eliminated in the state of glory. But the apostle is not speaking of the future, but of the present. He teaches that we are all alike before Christ. This is proven by what he adds when he says that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, because all are one in Christ.

Just as incorrect is the appeal to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, where he states that we shall come to the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown *man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (4: 13).

For here MAN is not contrasted with WOMAN, but with the immature child. This text says nothing of any sexual difference.

The difference between man and women is not annihilated after the resurrection, even though there shall be no pro-

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creation. The difference between man and woman is too essential than that it shall be wiped out. A woman is not only physically, but also spiritually different from a man. Her rich emotional life, her finely-developed feelings, and her intuitive grasp of things, make her differ greatly from man with his reasoning powers and matter-of-fact mind. This difference is not accidental. It is not even most evident in external appearances. It is part of our inmost self, in the case of man and woman both. And whatever is essential to each creature is permanent, and remains unchanged, even in the resurrection. Only that which is sinful is removed, that all may be to the glory of God.

## THE OTHER SIDE



## XI

### THE OTHER SIDE

*"Shame and everlasting contempt."*

*Daniel 12: 2.*

**WE** HAVE SEEN that the Word of God does not give us a definite picture of the resurrection body. But we do know that our bodies have an eternal future in which they shall develop into their perfect glory.

Now we must consider the other side, the future of the lost.

For we may not do as the false comforters, who try to create the hope of a blessed resurrection in the hearts of the bereaved when they stand at the open grave, no matter what the life of the departed may have been. No matter how sympathetic we may be with those that mourn, we may not depart from the path of revealed truth.

It does not indeed reveal fine tact to



speaking in the bereaved homes of the unbelievers of hell and damnation, and try to picture the sufferings of the damned. May God keep us from such coarseness? It is not necessary, in order to be true to God's Word, as some seem to think. An old proverb says: "Of the dead, nothing but good." But that does not mean that we must speak of the dead as if all had been pure, pious souls. It simply means that after men have departed we may but bring up their good qualities, and are to be silent about their evil words and deeds. That is the advice of love. It is also the advice of wisdom. How would we be able to say that an unbeliever has died in his sins? God's grace can change a man's heart at the last moment. Therefore we are bound by modesty to remain silent, which is quite different from saying that all the dead are blessed.

What may not be fitting in the home of mourning, is fitting, however, in a study on man's future and eternal destiny. God's Word is very plain when it speaks of the twofold future awaiting man after death. Has not Jesus given this plain statement: "The hour cometh, in which all that are

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in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment”?

Light and darkness are sharply contrasted in that statement. Already in this earthly life a line of demarcation runs through mankind, separating the believers from the unbelievers. But it is often unseen in this life. It will be fully revealed on the last day. Jesus speaks of that division here. After the resurrection the one goes into eternal life, and the other into eternal death.

But little has been revealed of the physical condition of those who because of their sin shall have the resurrection of damnation. Scripture tells us far less of their condition than of the bodily condition of the believers. We know more of the agonies of hell that they shall endure. There is but one text that refers to their bodies, and that one is found in the book of Daniel (12: 2, 3): “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

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The following verse shows that this actually refers to their physical being, for there we read that they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. Such brightness can be seen, and is therefore external. The shame and the abhorrence must therefore also refer to the body.

Evidently Daniel here describes the final existence of the godless after the last judgment. He clearly refers to a later period than the time of the resurrection, since we cannot very well believe that the lost will already at their resurrection reveal the marks of the everlasting punishment to which they shall be sentenced in the last judgment. No doubt something of that coming abhorrence shall be seen at once, since the soul influences the body. But in any case the body shall at last become an object of abhorrence for those who view it. It will cause men to shudder as before some fearsome apparition that chills the blood in our veins.

Holy Writ does not delineate the features of the damned for us. Geniuses of a later age have tried to picture the different

kinds of sinners to us, as they thought they would appear. The best known description is that in Dante's Hell, the book in which the poet leads us through the various confines of hell, and shows us groups of lost men and women: the sensualists, the gluttons, the misers, the murderers, the adulterers. He often pictures them in monstrous forms. But they are all portraits that he has drawn from his own fancy. He simply tries to portray the truth that the bodies of the damned shall clearly reveal the marks of their sins, and that the nature of their sins shall be reflected in their bodies after judgment-day, just as the glory of the saints shall be reflected in their bodies.

The idea as such is correct.

The face especially is a mirror of the soul.

Whatever stirs our soul brings about a certain expression on our face. The eye can flash as the lightning when we are angry. Our face flushes in shame. Laughter curls our lips when joy fills the heart, while the seriousness of life furrows our features. The face of man is an open book. A trained eye can read a history on it with-

out a word being spoken. A trembling lip, or a raised eyebrow, speaks as clearly as a written word, unless you are dealing with people whose face is ever a mask.

Not only our face expresses our character, be it noble or ignoble, but it is also shown by the carriage of our body. A man of lazy mind has an altogether different appearance than the man of energy. Indolence, love of ease, and on the other hand, decisiveness, give a certain bent to our bodily bearing. The man who crashes through life with a heavy tread is easily distinguished from the timid creature who goes through life in fear.

Nothing puts its stamp upon the body more plainly than sin.

You can at once recognize the low voluptuary in the glance of his eyes. The drunkard is a type of his own. The miser also, whose fingers become hooks trying to grasp money.

Sin not only ruins the soul, but also the body. Such is even evident in this life, though men may try to hide its effects. Sin makes broken men and women. And if they are not broken at once, they are

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marked, and the man who studies them soon sees sin's stigmata.

Just visit a rogue's gallery.

No end of evil faces.

It has often been said that the grace of God glorifies a repulsive face.

That is true. But then it is also plain that sin will make the most beautiful face repulsive.

On this side of the grave the effect of the soul on the body is but partial. Sin has not yet reached its culmination. There are many influences that temper it. But after the resurrection these influences are gone, and also all self-restraint that now keeps men from evil extremes. The bodies of the damned shall therefore be in harmony with their souls, and that means eternal shame and abhorrence.

Our Lord Jesus mentions one trait of that abhorrence when He speaks of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Every one knows that this expresses the soul's despair.

We shudder at the thought.

Burning tears of despair.

And teeth that grind in agony as men

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curse themselves for having despised the day of grace.

We do not care to say more. It is a futile effort to try to pierce the blackness of eternal night. But the little that the Lord has revealed is sufficient to warn us against such a future for body and soul.

May God give us grace to flee the wrath to come at the foot of the cross. There sin is covered. And for all who are in Christ there lies behind that cross, --the garden of the resurrection unto eternal life.

## THE MILLENNIUM





## XII

### THE MILLENNIUM

*"And bound him for a thousand years."*

*Revelation 20: 2.*

**WE NOW WISH** to give a brief study of the so-called Millennium.

We have written of the resurrection. That involved that according to our way of thinking there is but one resurrection, and not two. Whoever reads the whole Bible to Revelation 19 must come to that conclusion. Nowhere do you read of a first and second resurrection. Even to suppose two resurrections involves us in many difficulties. We would then have to suppose that Jesus shall return twice. The first time to raise some of the dead, and rule with them for a thousand years here on earth. The second time to judge the world, since the final judgment is always mentioned in Scripture with the coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven.

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We would then also have to suppose that there are two ascensions. The first from Mount Olivet, and the second after the millennium. For Christ would have to return to heaven again in order to appear from heaven to judge.

Any one who knows the Bible is convinced that the Bible usually speaks of but one ascension, and one resurrection. That would settle the matter were it not that we read in Revelation 20 of a FIRST resurrection. If this chapter indeed teaches that part of the dead are to be raised first, before there is a general resurrection, then we may face great difficulties in connection with what the Word of God says elsewhere about this doctrine, but it will be our duty to bow obediently before this statement as the truth of God, even though we may not comprehend it.

But let us see if the common exposition of these verses is correct. They read: "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the

abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he might deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be finished; after this he must be loosed for a little time.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

How must we understand these verses?

Let us begin by saying that we do not have a description here of historical events, in which each word must be taken literally. In the actual sense of that word Satan cannot be bound with a chain, since

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he is a spirit whom we cannot bind with fetters, but who can be checked and hindered in his influence.

In these verses we have a vision in which all kinds of earthly figures are used to reveal supernatural truths, since the inhabitants of this earth can only grasp such truths when they are clothed in earthly forms.

As we know from the eleventh verse of the previous chapter, the seer on the island Patmos was given a glance into heaven. He writes: "And I saw the heaven opened." In the first verses of chapter 20 he is also looking into the invisible world, for both the angel with the key and the great chain, and Satan do not dwell on the earth. As spirits, both are inhabitants of the invisible world that is hidden to the human eye.

In this supernatural world Satan is taken by a mighty angel. He is bound for a thousand years, and shut up in the abyss, the dwelling-place of the devils.

This binding of satanic power is comprehensible imagery. It means that the influence of Satan is crippled. Such lasts during a period that is represented by the

symbolical figure of a thousand, a figure that is used as a symbol both in the last book of the Bible, and elsewhere.

Owing to this binding of satanic power the devil shall not deceive the nations, that is, the heathen, where he has an almost unlimited sway by means of idolatry, till the thousand years are ended.

His power will still be seen over individual persons. But formerly he guided the public opinion of people, and set the fashion of their ideas. He was the REIGNING power on earth. He guided the nations, and drove them on the way to destruction with his lying theories and principles.

And, behold, the binding of Satan puts an end to his position of power. He shall no more deceive the nations as a whole till, as John expresses himself, the thousand years are finished. When these years are passed he will regain his influence once more, but not for long. He will be loosed, but only for a brief period.

That constitutes the first half of the vision.

What is the other half?

This forms a companion-picture of the

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first vision. We are again led into the invisible world, but now John shows us the bright instead of the dark side.

Over against the satanic picture he has just shown he portrays the heavenly and the Divine. In very fact, John does not see PEOPLE, human beings, who have risen from the dead, but *souls* with which heaven is populated. These souls are seated on thrones in heaven. Literally this is, of course, impossible, for souls are spirits that can not take their places on thrones. It simply means that they have kingly rule, a dominion that is contrasted to the thwarted rule of Satan. Since they are kings, judgment is given unto them. What this may mean we will pass by. It is not of importance to us just now. It is an added touch to take away all doubt about their kingly dignity.

What kind of SOULS were they that John saw?

There are two groups.

The one group is composed of martyrs, "the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God."

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The second group is composed of those who have had no fellowship with the beast and his image. They are those who have kept themselves from the anti-christian influences in the world, and have persevered in the faith unto the end.

Of both these groups we read: "And they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years." When Satan had not yet been bound, but enjoyed complete liberty, this evil spirit had authority or spiritual leadership over the nations. But now the spiritual leadership is given to the saints. Their influence, which is none other than the influence and power of the Gospel, now prevails. Instead of the deceivers as Satan and his servants, the saints have become the leaders in the full sense of that word. With Christ, who is with them in heaven, they send out their spiritual influences on earth, to lead human-kind on the path of God's Word in those thousand years of liberty. Such is their authority and kingship.

The souls of the martyrs therefore lived, and ruled with Christ in heaven, and exercised a leading influence among the nations on earth, says John. "But the rest



of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished" (R. V.). The martyrs and the believers **LIVED** and reigned from heaven. Those remaining are the unbelievers. Because of their unbelief they lie in death, a death that is a prelude to eternal death. Even when they are raised to be judged, they are not living in the full sense of that word, because they have been deprived of all spiritual life. Only the souls of the redeemed truly live, but not the souls of the unbelievers, since they are dead in trespasses and sins. There is nothing more to say about the rest of the dead, for John just mentions this in passing.

After mentioning briefly the lot of the unbelievers, he returns to the first two groups. He had said of them that they lived in heaven, and reigned with Christ, and then he describes this state of living and reigning in the brief sentence: "This is the first resurrection."

This characterization cannot in this connection refer to the bodily resurrection. In the whole paragraph to which it refers there is not a single word or letter about the resurrection of the body. The vision

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reveals SOULS, souls in HEAVEN. And since the resurrection refers to BODIES, and takes place on EARTH, there is nothing whatsoever to be found here about a bodily resurrection, no matter how men may try to find it.

The first resurrection is the awakening of the redeemed souls in heavenly glory, where they receive kingly dignity, because the crown of righteousness has been laid away for them. The word resurrection is used here because Scripture also calls our birth unto a spiritual life a resurrection. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Ephesians 5:14). Besides, the heavenly life must necessarily lead to the bodily resurrection.

The only question that remains is, in what period must we place the millenium? The vision is found at the end of the book of Revelation. But that does not mean that what is written there shall take place exactly at the end of the world's history. It is characteristic of the book that many of the visions run parallel. In the previous chapters the manifestations of the Antichrist among the civilized peoples

were described. Nothing had yet been said of the nations and tribes that lived outside of the ennobling influences of Christianity, and who had no leading position in the world, the nations that are called Gog and Magog a little farther on. But these must also be mentioned. Satan desires to deceive them. He will stir them up against Christ, when he is loosed. These are the nations, or heathen, who are spoken of in this chapter. They have existed since the days of Christ. But they had little influence in the civilized world. They are under the sway of Satan, for the service of idols is a service of the devils, says Scripture.

John must also be set at ease about these nations. A vision is given for that purpose. He had already seen how God judged the world powers. Now the judgment on Gog and Magog must be shown. The great, anti-christian Babylon had persecuted the Church of the believers, but had finally fallen. So also Gog and Magog would not gain the final victory over the Church. The "binding" of Satan, their inspirer and leader, would be a proof for this. Again and again there would be periods in

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which the power of Satan would be bridled to give a breathing spell to God's people. These pauses in the struggle of the ages are the thousand years. Then the spiritual life of the Church flourishes, and sanctifies all human relations. More than once we have had such a millennium in the course of history,—periods of rest, in which Christ rules with His saints, and their ruling power is felt in the course of human development.

In the future we shall see such periods again. In the midst of its oppression the Church needs such pauses now and then to gain fresh courage for the battle. There shall probably be such a millennium as the final, decisive end comes. That is, such a period when everything on earth follows the demands of the Word of God for the time being . . . till Satan is loosed again, once for all, but to be then cast down forever.



## THE JUDGMENT-DAY



XIII

THE JUDGMENT-DAY

*"Inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained."*

*Acts 17: 31*

**A**FTER the resurrection of both the just and the unjust comes the last judgment as the climax of the world's drama.

The thought that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ fills us with awe. That prospect makes us feel greatly responsible for all our deeds, and serves to heighten our moral life.

If we were not to be called to account for all that we have or have not done; if no hour would ever approach in which we would be weighed in just balances, our sinful heart would entice us to live after our own desires, and say with the godless:



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“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

Belief in a coming judgment day is not some fruitless doctrine without practical results. It is an incentive to walk in holiness before the face of God, and by the power of His grace to avoid all things that are displeasing to Him. It urges us to live close to Christ as the True Vine, in order that we may bring forth much fruit to the glory of God.

For these reasons alone it is to be regretted that many among the confessing Christians of our day have no Scriptural view of the last judgment.

They do not eliminate this confession from their creed, but change its meaning. They love to say that the history of the world is the judgment of the world.

In a certain sense this is true. Sin brings punishment. It pollutes our conscience. It fills us with fear. It draws a world of woe in its train. On the other hand we can see that peoples and persons who walk in the paths of justice are blest in this earthly life with prosperity, while in addition they ever have a deep peace in

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their consciences, and can go their way with joy.

But this is not the absolute law of life.

We must often repeat the plaint of Asaph that the godless have no bands till the day of their death, while the cup of trial is often given to God's saints. We by no means always see sin punished, and virtue rewarded. Life is not as simple as all that. We often see sin crowned, and innocence trampled under foot. The lie often triumphs, while the truth is often crucified.

We do not always see with our eyes that a just God reigns in heaven. We only know this by faith. And this faith makes us strong in the midst of the untold confusion and the unexplained enigmas among which we must pass our days.

Yet everything within us calls for a day of reckoning in which the crooked shall be made straight. We yearn for a day of judgment that shall justify God gloriously, though His way was often in darkness. The sense of justice that the Creator has put in our hearts can not be eradicated. It is not a personal desire for wrath, therefore, but the yearning for the victory

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of justice that causes the martyrs in heaven to cry: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

Holy Writ answers this cry for JUSTICE by saying that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.

The Triune God shall mete out justice on the last day, but He has ordained the Man, Christ Jesus, to be His accredited Judge. Calling him Man is a reference to His incarnation and work as Redeemer. As Mediator He began His saving work here on earth, and continues it in heaven. And since this work will find its culmination in the final judgment, it is meet that this same Christ, in His Divine majesty and glory, takes His place on the judgment-seat.

He shall judge the EARTH, when He shall be seated on the great white throne.

All who have every dwelt on earth shall be judged. Those that live at His second

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coming, and all the generations that have died, but have then been called forth from **their graves by the voice of the Son of God.** And those also who have found their grave in the sea. Great and small, rich and poor, princes and peoples, wise and simple, all shall stand in the blinding light of the great white throne to receive their sentence. All humankind, with its many, many millions, shall be there as one mass of men, for it must be revealed before the eyes of all that justice finally triumphs.

A judicial investigation will precede this **final sentence.**

Holy Writ sometimes speaks of a **DAY**, and sometimes even of an **HOUR** of judgment, to teach us that we must not think of a lengthy judicial process, but that all things will be decided in a brief period of time.

Earthly judges are duty bound to work slowly. We may not always complain about the slow process of law. At least, in serious cases swift justice may be bad justice. Judges cannot read the heart. They must search for the truth. They can err, and must therefore ever be on their

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guard. Much time is therefore necessary to pronounce sentences that are as just as possible.

The Son of God is omniscient, however, He tries the reins and hearts in a moment.

It may be impossible for us to form any conception of a judicial investigation that takes in millions of men, and yet takes but a few moments of time, but this is no difficulty for the Heavenly Judge from Whom nothing is hidden.

His investigation is minute. It covers our deeds, and also the inclination of our hearts, from which the fountains of our lives come forth. Our inner life probably condemns us still more than our outward life. For who can number the evil thoughts that flit through our brain during the course of years? Who knows the secret impulses of our soul, impulses that we are unable to express clearly in thought and word, but which shall be investigated in judgment?

It is not sufficient, however, that we should stand naked and revealed before our Judge, and that He should search the inmost recesses of our hearts with His flaming glance. It is also necessary that

we ourselves know the results of His investigation, so that we are convinced of its justice, and approve His sentence.

If you raise the question, how it is possible that these many millions should know their position before God, then you can find the answer in the picture of the last judgment, as it is found in the Revelation of St. John. When mankind stands before the great white throne you read that the books are opened. This does not refer to the great Book of Remembrance that lies before God. It refers to our consciences, books that are as numerous as the millions of mortals.

Your conscience, with its memory of steel, forgets nothing, even though for the time being much of what has happened is not before your mind. It contains a synopsis of your whole life. When this book is opened, you will see as with a lightning flash all that you have ever said or done. Let me illustrate. In days of prosperity you sometimes forget about yourself and your deeds altogether. But in a moment of terror, when God Almighty suddenly comes before your mind, you suddenly see yourself as you are, so

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that you do not know where to hide yourself from very shame. THAT also is an instance when the books are opened. But this shall take place on a much greater scale on the day of judgment. In the twinkling of an eye you will view your whole life in all its aspects. You will know your hidden self in its deepest depths, deprived of all outward pretense.

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According to what standard will the Judge judge you?

According to the standard of God's Word, both the Gospel and the Law.

First of all you will be judged according to the standard of the Gospel.

When the Son of God came into the world He began to judge. He at once came with His fan in His hand to separate the wheat from the chaff. Wherever He came there was a crisis or judgment. These words mean the same in the original. He drew a line of separation between people. That line even went through the homes, as He testified: "For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and

the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew 10: 35).

This judging of Christ continues throughout the ages.

He still separates people when He comes in the Gospel. The decisive factor is faith in His Name. The attitude that we take toward Him decides whether we are with our hearts on His right hand or on His left. This judgment takes place within us. It is spoken in our conscience, for our conscience declares whether we are for or against Christ.

On the last day this inward judgment shall be publicly proclaimed. The same standard will again be used: faith in the Christ of the Scriptures. Then all shall know who have accepted Him in faith, and who have cast Him aside in unbelief. He shall send out His angels to place the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left.

The Gospel shall therefore be the decisive standard.

The Gospel stands in living relation to the law, however. The law demands good works of us, to which we are enabled by



the grace of the Gospel. These good works consist in obeying the Lord's commands. True faith is never fruitless, for it is impossible that those who are ingrafted into Christ with a living faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

Though faith therefore decides our eternal weal or woe, the Law is also taken into account. The tree is known by its fruits. Faith is known by works. That is the reason why Scripture ever mentions our works when it speaks of the final judgment. A dead faith will be of no avail before God's tribunal. A living faith works in love, which is the principle of the law, and reveals itself in love to God and to our neighbor.

On the last day the Judge shall take notice of our love to our neighbor especially. This love is noticed by the unbelievers more than our love to God. The unbelievers must also be convinced that God's judgment is just. This love to our neighbor was expressed in giving a drink of cold water or a bite of bread; in the visit to an invalid, and the giving of clothing to the poor. Love not only writes with words, but also with deeds. Christ

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considers these deeds when He judges. Though the believers may have forgotten them because they were considered of little importance, Christ has not. They are for Him a proof of the purity of their faith.

Gospel and Law shall both be used in Judgment.

The Gospel shall decide our salvation or damnation, without any consideration for our works whatsoever. But our works shall decide the degree of glory that shall be given us. Scripture refers to this when it states that we shall receive a reward of grace for our good works. This will be more fully discussed later. Now we wish to emphasize that lack of good works has dire results for eternity. How can this be otherwise? In His parable of the vine and the branches Jesus states that we glorify the Father by bearing much fruit. And has the Father not said: "They that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"?

Every day brings us a step nearer to the final decision.

God be thanked, the Man whom He has appointed to judge the earth, will judge in RIGHTEOUSNESS. He will consider the

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measure of light that we have received. They that lived without the law shall be judged by the law of God that still works in their consciences. But they that have known the will of the Lord, and were disobedient, shall be beaten with many stripes.

This should quiet the minds of those who are anxious about the heathen. They often ask whether those millions will be lost who have never heard the Gospel through no fault of their own. We may not, indeed, say that they are saved because of their ignorance, since Scripture teaches plainly that there is but one Name given whereby sinners must be saved. But we may comfort ourselves with the thought of the unimpeachable RIGHT-EOUSNESS that shall be maintained by the Lord in judgment. The heathen will never be in better hands than in those of THIS Judge.

It will be a righteous judgment in the fullest sense of the word. So unimpeachable will that justice be, that whether we are sentenced to outer darkness or are beckoned to enter eternal light, EVERY-ONE shall raise his hand in a solemn oath to testify: God is just!

## ETERNAL PUNISHMENT



XIV

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

*"And these shall go away into  
eternal punishment."*

*Matthew 25: 46.*

AFTER having examined the books of our consciences, Christ will pronounce His sentence. And that sentence will depend on the fact of our belief or unbelief. Whoever have confessed Christ as their Savior shall enter glory. But all who have denied Him in this day of grace shall receive eternal punishment, a punishment that is designated by Scripture as the second, or eternal death, in hell.

Hell.

It is a word that makes us shudder.

There has been a time when this place did not exist.

As long as there was no evil in the world there was no necessity for a place where sin would be punished. Prisons, and places of exile, have a right of existence

only in a community where there is crime. The idea is therefore altogether wrong that God must have created such a place of darkness from the beginning. It has been made in this measureless universe at some later period. Where, we do not know, even though we instinctively point downward when we speak of hell, just as we instinctively point upward when we speak of heaven.

Since sin began in the world of angels, and not in the world of men, hell was first ordained for the fallen spirits, and then for disobedient men and women. Jesus says this plainly in his prophetic message on the last judgment. He turns to those who stand on His left hand and says: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

After sin has crept in from the spiritual world into the world of men, hell has been appointed as the place of punishment for all human beings who have made common cause with Satan, and therefore belong to his circle.

Holy Writ presents hell to us with all

kinds of figures taken from our earthly life.

The Greek word for hell, namely, Gehenna, makes many of these figures comprehensible to our minds. This name is derived, as even an uneducated reader can see, from the word GEHINNOM, which is literally, the vale of hinnom, a valley near Jerusalem, lying between two mountains southeast of the city.

This valley has an evil reputation in sacred history. Under the kings Ahaz and Manasse the little children were sacrificed there to the idol Moloch. This was a heathen custom, but this custom had become part of the religion of Israel. As a result of this the place brought to mind the apostasy from the true God; it spoke of utter godlessness, and also reminded of the fire in which the children were consumed, or through which they at least had to pass.

The pious king Josiah destroyed the valley, and had the priests declare it an unclean place. From that time on the place was avoided as an abomination. The valley became the public refuse dump of the holy city. All the offal of the city was



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brought there, as well as the carcasses of unclean beasts. In such carcasses the worms multiplied. To prevent a pestilence, a continual fire was kept there to consume these putrefying masses.

As a matter of course the vale of Hinnom became the symbol of the place where all the godless, the apostate, the unclean shall be gathered at the end of the ages. The valley became a type of the gehenna or hell, and the sorrows of the damned were pictured in harmony with what was seen day after day in this gruesome place. Naturally men began to speak of unquenchable FIRE and a worm that did not die, to express the horror and the pain of the punishment of hell. Every one who heard those words would be impressed with the gruesome lot of the godless. He would think of the accursed vale of hinnom with its flames, and its stench, and its gnawing worms, that would make the feelings of the beholders revolt.

These expressions are not to be taken literally therefore.

No more than those other expressions that portray the place of punishment as outer darkness, the pool of fire, and the

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place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Taking those words in their actual sense they contradict each other. A place where fire burns can hardly be at the same time a place of impenetrable darkness.

We are not to think, therefore, of a place where some oven is stoked in which the lost are writhing in pain. Such coarse conceptions minimize the terrible earnestness of Jesus' words. Our Savior used these figures to make plain the inexpressible woe of sinners who are lost in body and soul.

We do the same. We speak figuratively of the gnawing worm of remorse. Also of consuming self-reproach. Who does not at once realize that the gnashing of teeth is a description of bitter despair? And the weeping as an attempt to picture the vain remorse of a man who sees too late that he has sinned away his soul, and must blame himself for his doom?

Then add the terrors of an outer darkness in which no gleam of comforting light ever comes, terrors that are increased with the conviction that by their own fault the damned have made themselves unworthy of dwelling on the new earth that

is enveloped in the light of God's glory, and you have a dim idea of the soul-suffering of the damned.

There is not only spiritual suffering in hell, however.

After the resurrection, body and soul are just as closely united with each other as before death. And we all know how even in this present life the sorrows of our soul, such as remorse and despair, put their stamp on our bodies. A man as David cried that when he hid his sin in silence his moisture was changed as with the drought of summer, and that his bones wasted away through his groaning all the day long.

Many have therefore tried to picture the physical suffering of the lost. But Scripture is silent about it, and the subject is too serious to be made the play of fantasy. The Word of God simply states that the godless shall arise from the grave unto eternal abhorrence. This one feature is enough. Let us drop the curtain. What God has not revealed, should remain hidden.

Hell contains the depths of Satan which we are not to seek out in our curiosity. It

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is the place where sin has come to its consummation. There its power has come to full development, without any restraining grace. There sin is seen in all its repulsive ugliness as it has never been seen on earth, since God always checks it more or less here below. And we are grateful to God that He has not revealed to us this extreme development of sin.

In this place of pain God's wrath will reveal itself in an unrestrained measure. And this wrath shall cut the heart more than any remorse of conscience. This wrath is the PUNISHMENT of sin.

It is an eternal punishment.

The worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

In many ways men have tried to take away the force of these words, but the Word of God is very clear on this point. Though the word "eternal" often occurs in Scripture in the sense of a long period of time, it has its ordinary meaning in connection with the punishment of the lost. No one thinks of weakening its sense when they speak of eternal life on a new earth. But then it is also wrong to

give the word another meaning when the Bible speaks of eternal death.

Men try to reason away eternal punishment in beautiful and touching words.

An eternal punishment would be contrary to God's love, a love of which Scripture testifies unceasingly.

But do these defenders of the love of God forget that a love that is not righteous is not love, but weakness, which we may not even suppose to exist in the heart of God? In our earthly life it sometimes happens that a father must sit as judge in a case involving a dear son of his, who has become a law-breaker. Would you accuse that father of lack of love if he sentenced his own flesh and blood according to the demands of strict justice? May he violate the majesty of the law for the sake of parental love? And would a righteous God have to violate Justice to excuse a sinner, and then such a sinner to whom He has offered grace and deliverance in Christ, but in vain?

All the efforts that are made to explain away eternal death into a temporal punishment, or to reason away all punishment, are made because men do not take

sin seriously. But is sin such a little thing? Just some slight flaw? An imperfection on the way to holiness?

Then eternal punishment would indeed be too severe.

But if sin is a deliberate and terrible transgression of Divine Justice; if it is rebellion against the King of kings, and a flaunting of His majesty; if it is what jurists call a capital crime,—then it must be punished with the severest sentence, eternal death.

God does not play with guilt and responsibility.

Everyone shall finally have to bear his own burden.

For the one the degree of punishment in hell may be heavier than for the other; there may be difference in the degree of suffering, as God's Word indeed teaches; the one may sink down deeper into hell than the other. . . . these differences do not affect the reality of the punishment, for all the lost go to the place of terrors, and enter eternal death, unless they have turned to Christ while they were still on earth to receive eternal life from His hand.



## THE REDEEMED





XV

THE REDEEMED

*"And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."*

*Revelation 21: 5.*

AFTER giving one swift glance at the awful doom of those who are lost, we turn with cheerful minds to consider the future of the redeemed who have found rest for their soul in Christ on this side of the grave.

Over against the eternal death of the damned stands the eternal life of the saved. If we are to make a thorough study of this subject we must first of all know in what sphere this rich life is to be enjoyed.

Many take no thought of this important matter. They do not try to have a clear conception of the state of the redeemed after the last judgment. They are satisfied with the assurance that they will be

declared just. What shall take place after their acquittal is for them a matter of little or no concern. They do not feel the need of a clear delineation of that future. They often think of it as heavenly, and are therefore satisfied with a general description of it as of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. Everything that is earthly and material is removed from their thinking, and the heavenly and spiritual joys are their one and all.

It is indeed true that the spiritual must ever be held in higher regard by us than the material. We must cherish the heavenly above the earthly. But we are not allowed to ignore the earthly altogether from our hopes for the future, however, and completely spiritualize the blessedness of eternal life. For in that future age we shall not have a purely spiritual existence, but shall walk about in a glorified body, even though this body shall have characteristics that are quite different from those of the mansion of clay in which our soul now dwells. In addition, Christ has said that the meek shall inherit the EARTH. And He was not speaking in imagery, but was speaking of actual facts, when He said

that the apostles would drink of the fruit of the vine new with Him in the Kingdom of His Father.

After judgment-day the earthly and material shall not disappear.

But it will not remain in the state and condition in which it is now. As a consequence of sin God's curse has come upon the earth, as we know from the history of Paradise. As a sign of that curse the earth now brings forth thorns and thistles. This curse has coursed through all parts of creation. The rough violence of the elements; the heat of the desert, killing all life; the bitter cold of the north with its death; the hurricanes on land and sea, are so many proofs of the curse on creation. Therefore we read in the Bible that God rebukes the sea and the wild beasts, and that Jesus rebuked the lake of Galilee. This rebuking teaches us that an unholy power works in nature. Sometimes God allows this evil power free rein, and then again He checks it with His almighty hand.

In such a world, having the ravages of sin, and broken by God's curse, sinless, resurrected man would be out of place.

Even in our present life we form surroundings that fit our being, our needs, and our natural disposition. The study of the scientist has quite a different appearance than the office of the business man. In the same way there will have to be harmony between glorified mankind on the one hand, and the world in which they shall dwell on the other.

This is a thought taken from Scripture.

Scripture teaches that the human body has been made from the dust of the ground. Man is therefore not a being that is strange to the earth, but is part of it through the creative deed of God.

That is why everything that is experienced by man has its reflex action on the earth which, as it were, concentrates itself in man. The Word of God teaches us that creation progresses or retrogresses as man develops into a higher, or sinks into a lower state. In his sinless state man lived in a paradise in which the world reached its culmination. In his sinful state man lives in a world that fell with him, and is stricken with a curse. And in the state of glory in which we shall enter after the resurrection, we shall necessarily

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live in a world from which the curse is removed.

Paradise shall therefore be restored. But there will be this difference. The world of glory shall be much richer than the world of Paradise. The hidden glories of creation shall then have come to their full development. And then there shall also be this difference, that this coming glory of creation will never be removed, as was possible in the first Paradise.

The power that shall cause this purification and improvement of all creation is mentioned in the text that we have placed above this essay. In one of his visions on Patmos John hears the Lord Jesus Himself say: "Behold, I make all things new." The word NEW does not mean that some new thing is to be created of which there had been no trace before, but a renewal of all things.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth, that is, the universe. And what God has once created He never surrenders to annihilation. He does not cast the old world away, that now lies under the curse, to replace it with a new world. He does to the world what He does to man when

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He saves him. When the grace of God grips you, you receive a new heart, a new spirit, a new will. But that does not mean that some new element is placed in you. The characteristics of your personality remain, though they undergo a fundamental change. You do not become another person by grace. You remain the same person, with the same faculties, the same talents and gifts, but all has been changed, RENEWED, because sin has been eliminated. You did not become a completely new creation, but a recreation. Your change was not a new birth, but a rebirth.

In the same way nature shall be renewed.

Jesus even uses the word regeneration when He speaks to His apostles of the future. We read in Matthew 19: 28: "And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Everything that takes place at the last judgment, therefore: the burning of the elements, the crash of creation, the mov-

ing of the powers of heaven, etc., shall not be an annihilation of creation, to replace it with something new. The upheaval will be a furnace from which the old world shall come forth in a new and glorious form. It will be the birthpangs that accompany the birth of a new earth on which not sin, but righteousness shall dwell.

This is the so-called passing away of the world. As the Word of God states, not the substance, but the form of this world passeth away. The form of humiliation in which we now find the world, shall be replaced by a form of glory that reminds of sinless Paradise. We find, indeed, that the new earth under the new heaven is pictured to us in the book of Revelation in terms that remind us of Paradise. There is a stream with water clear as crystal, descending from the throne of God and the Lamb. There is a Tree of life, but now multiplied, for on the banks of the crystal stream are lanes of trees of life, that give their fruit month by month, and whose leaves even are full of life-giving power.

We cannot give a detailed outline of this new earth, since Scripture says but little



of it. But we know that the New Jerusalem, the holy city that John saw descending from heaven, shall be the center of it.

Jerusalem makes us think at once of the Church of the Lord. But then not in a limited sense, as if it would only refer to the Church triumphant. The holy city is much more inclusive. The imagery that is used in describing it makes us think of a harmonious union of all the results of culture, a purified civilization that enriches all life with its treasures.

All the results of philosophy and science, of knowledge and wisdom, will be gathered together in that City, in so far as they have value for eternity. We shall there see the consummation of the Kingdom of God, in which all that is beautiful, good, and true, is united into a perfect whole for the glory of God.

Though the basic elements of the new earth are the same as those of the old, altogether new laws will rule there. There is no sun or moon. The Lord God Himself shall be its light with His glory, and shall **tabernacle among men.**

This also gives an answer to the question as to what shall take place with heaven,

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

the dwelling-place of the angels. In our dispensation, because of sin, heaven and earth have become contrasts. Since there is no sin on the new earth, the contrast between heaven and earth will be removed, though the distinction between the two will remain. Earthly creation shall, as it were, be enveloped in the brilliant glory of heaven. They meet together, without mixing together. The heavenly and the earthly are then reconciled together into a perfectly harmonious universe.



## THE NEW EARTH



XVI

THE NEW EARTH

*"Enter thou into the joy of  
thy Lord."*

*Matthew 25: 21.*

**T**HE NEW EARTH, enveloped in the uncreated light of the Lord, shall be inhabited by a glorified mankind that is risen from the dead. They are the ones who have found rest for their soul in Christ.

In the language of Holy Writ you can call this glorified world a marriage chamber, where the wise virgins have entered with their burning lamps. You can also think of it as a paradise, where the waters of life ripple along. Or you can think of it as a Temple, where the redeemed serve God day and night as priests. But whatever figure you may take, it will ever reveal the truth that this new world shall be the habitation of the reconciled Church,

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

and of the Church alone. All the unbelievers shall be irrevocably excluded.

How must we picture the state of the people of God as they enjoy everlasting life on the new earth?

It goes without saying that all of them shall together enjoy perfect salvation. God does not accept the person of men. He does not make the one less blessed than the other. Half a salvation would even be an incongruity. Then they who would be but partly saved would ever have some unfulfilled desire, a hunger after the fulness of salvation, and a thirst after the things that would still be needed for perfection, and this is contrary to what we read in the words of Scripture: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation : 16, 17).

There is, therefore, one salvation, alike for all.

It shall make no difference whether you have endured the burden and heat of the

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

day, because you were called in your youth to work in the Lord's vineyard, and have served Him your life long with much sorrow and care, than whether you have come to the knowledge of the truth in old age, and have therefore been able to do but little or nothing for the Lord to reveal your gratitude for the grace you have received at the eleventh hour.

On the day of judgment the Lord shall make all these called and blessed equal in their salvation. He gives unto them all the one penny of salvation. No matter how poor or how rich their earthly life may have been in service that glorified God, in the matter of salvation the one is not blessed a whit above the other.

This is a very comforting truth for those who have been saved at the edge of the grave, or have at least let their youthful years slip by in sin. When they finally see their guilt, and the fulness of God's forgiving love in Christ, they realize that they have lost so much by carelessly letting the Savior pass by, without giving their powers in His blessed service. In all those years they have missed the inward peace of God through the blood of



the cross. They have not known the comfort of prayer. Their years seem to be empty because they had no value for eternity.

Then it is a thought to refresh the soul that in the matter of salvation they shall not be one whit behind the others. Probably the voices of those who have been saved in the last days of their life will resound above the others in the songs of praise that come from the lips of the redeemed. Who can sing of grace as they who look back on a lost life? Among all the saints they will probably rejoice the most in God's free grace.

But then the question must come before our minds whether our life on earth is of no value whatsoever for eternity? Are the twenty, forty, sixty, or eighty years that we have lived here below meaningless for the future that awaits us after the last day? Is life eternal something altogether new, something that has not the slightest relation with our earthly life? And is it not a questionable and dangerous doctrine that, if we are but saved on our deathbed, it makes no difference whether we have served the Lord whole-

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

heartedly, or whether we have despised Him by wasting our precious time in the service of sin and Satan?

God's Word gives a satisfying answer to these questions.

It declares that there is an inseparable connection between this life and life eternal. You have but to remember the saying about the dead that die in the Lord. We read of them that they rest of their labors, and that their works follow them into eternity. These works are the results, the fruits of their life on earth, a life that was often full of care and toil. They shall rest of that LABOR, but the FRUIT of that labor accompanies them into eternity. The harvest that is gathered into the barns of eternity is, to a certain extent, determined by what was sown in this life. Paul expresses that truth when he says: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5: 10).

But this must not be misunderstood.

The fruit of our earthly development does not decide at all whether we shall

receive salvation hereafter. Salvation is altogether the fruit of Christ's redemptive work, a work that is not completed by us, since it is complete in itself. But the manner of our earthly life does decide what shall be the degree of glory to which we shall attain in the future. The idea of some, that there will be no degrees in glory, no more than in salvation, must be cast aside as invalid on the basis of Scripture. God's Word teaches plainly that our works and life are not meritorious. We can neither earn salvation nor glory with them. If every heartbeat of ours was consecrated to the service of the Lord, we would have done but that which we are obliged to do. We would still have to call ourselves unprofitable servants who could make no demand for any reward.

But alongside of this truth Scripture teaches just as emphatically that we shall receive a reward according to our works. Not a reward in the common, ordinary sense of pay for given services, but a reward of grace. It pleases God to express His approval of a life that was to His praise, by giving these obedient children a higher degree of glory. God is not un-

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

righteous, says the Bible, that He should forget your work, and the labor of love that you have bestowed in His Name. Jesus even declared that on the last day He would not forget a cup of cold water, or a bite of bread that was distributed in His Name.

We shall surely receive a reward of grace.

And this reward shall be in accordance with our works.

A reward of grace for what we have suffered and sacrificed for Christ's sake. A reward for the use we have made of the talents entrusted to our care. A reward for the love we have shown our enemies, and the generosity we have shown to the needy. A reward for the help given to the poor, the sick, and those in prison. This reward is now kept in heaven for us, but at the second coming of Christ it will be distributed according to the measure of our good works.

This is plainly taught in Scripture. When the Son of man comes in His glory He will reward every one according to his deeds. A hundredfold reward, with life eternal, will be given to him who for Jesus'

sake has forsaken father and mother, and wife and children. The servant who has traded with his one pound till it became five, is placed over five cities. The one who increased his pound to ten, over ten cities. And the one who hides it in a napkin shall be deprived of even that one pound. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

There is no doubt, therefore, that salvation is the same for all the redeemed, but that the glory which they shall have on the new earth differs, and this difference is decided by the fruits of their lives on earth. As there is degree of punishment in hell, because the one, in connection with his past life, receives more stripes than the other, so also there will be a difference in glory in the new creation.

Every one receives such a measure of glory as is fitting for him alone, because it is in harmony with his capacity and ability. For the good works that are done according to the law of God are not only beneficial for the man who has received

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

them, but they also bring a blessing to him who has done them.

Every good deed that we perform develops our character, and tends to ennoble our personality. You can plainly see this in the works of love that come forth from faith, and are done to the glory of God. For love is ever the greatest. Love makes us generous, as egoism makes us narrow and small. And the generous soul receives much more of the glory of God on the new earth than the narrow-minded man. The noblest hearts necessarily stand in the fullest light. No doubt the martyrs will be the nearest to the center of God's glory.

But no one need fear any jealousy, even though for a moment we would conceive of such a possibility in a sinless world. No one shall be able to bear more glory than he receives. Together the redeemed will form a multi-voiced choir in which the alto, the baritone, and the bass flow together in harmony to the glory of God.



## ETERNAL LIFE





XVII

ETERNAL LIFE

*"Enter thou into the joy of  
thy Lord."*

*Matthew 25:23.*

EAR hath not heard, and eye hath not seen, and it hath not been conceived in the mind of man, what God has prepared for His saints in the renewed and glorified world. But He has revealed enough in His Word to give us a general outline of this coming glory.

The main thought is one of eternal life, a life in which the power of death is broken.

The last enemy, death, has then been destroyed. As Mediator Christ has redeemed the world to God. In the Church humankind has been saved, and the final purpose of redemption has been attained. And though Christ shall forever remain the glorified Head of His Church, He shall yet surrender the Kingdom to God the

Father, that the Triune God may be all in all.

The life of Paradise, as it was before the fall, will have been restored. But then with this difference, that it can never again be disturbed by sin. No fall is then possible for man or creation.

What shall be the nature of this eternal life?

The common idea considers that to be eternal which has no beginning or end. Eternal life is then thought to be a sinless repetition of life on earth. The days have then been lengthened to years, and the years to centuries.

But this idea is far from correct. Even though you should let thousands and millions of years pass before your mind, they would have a certain duration; they would occupy a certain amount of time, and time or duration will be non-existent on the renewed earth.

Time and eternity are opposites.

Time, though you stretch it over ten thousands of years, never becomes eternity, but always remains time.

The characteristic of eternal life is mentioned by the angel in the book of Revela-

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

tion, when he stands with his one foot on the earth, and with the other on the sea, and declares **THAT THERE SHALL BE NO MORE TIME.**

Here on earth, where time is regulated by sun and moon, we see the moments succeed each other as restlessly as the grains of sand run through an hour glass. The clock ticks off the minutes without pause. Time has become a chase of seconds that is wearisome in the extreme. But this ceases in eternity. Time no longer exists. On the new earth life no longer goes from day to day, and from year to year. A higher order of existence is then come. The world is no longer one of BECOMING, but one of BEING. You will look in vain for the passing waves of time.

We can hardly say more than that about it.

It is an altogether different dispensation than the one in which we now live.

The Word of God describes life eternal with figures taken from our earthly life. But this is usually done by way of contrast, to teach us that much of what we experience here below will then no more

be known. There shall be no night there, no tears, no crying, no mourning, no sin, no curse, no death,—altogether negative traits which show how rich that life shall be, for these unhappy experiences make our present life somber.

Alongside of these negative traits the Bible also mentions many positive ones. It speaks of white robes, waving palm branches, musical zithers, and kingly crowns. You see at once that the writers had to strain their language to give us some idea of the blessedness of the children of God. Jesus has comprehended all these phases of the blessedness of the redeemed in the one comprehensive phrase which He uses in the parable of the talents, when on the day of reckoning He says both to the man of two talents, and to the one of five talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD!"

The joy of the Lord,—that is indeed the most perfect description of blessed, eternal life.

We already know a little of its blessed-

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

ness here on earth. For the Kingdom of God is, in addition to righteousness and peace, also *joy* in the Holy Spirit. That is the reason why the angel at the birth of Jesus announced "great joy." That is why the disciples are called the children of the bride-chamber, and the Church as a whole is called the bride of Christ.

These, and many similar expressions, point to the joyful character of the life of the believers. On earth they taste but the beginnings of this joy, however. They do not enjoy an unclouded happiness, for they must still struggle against indwelling sin. But that makes the promise for eternity the more encouraging: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35: 10).

These are tones that cause us to lift up our heads in a life which at its best is but labor and sorrow. For though we receive fresh loving-kindnesses from our God every morning of our lives, the background of our life, as it has been poisoned by sin, remains dark and black. How

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

great shall that joy then be, when we have been taken up into glory through the grace of God, and our life will have as its background the golden glow of pure happiness!

And what shall be the PLEASURES of this life of light?

First and foremost, the fellowship with the Triune God, of which we have had a foretaste on earth through faith. To restore this fellowship Christ came into the world. Where we in our blindness had sought life in perishable things that left our hearts empty, He has called us away from these broken cisterns to the fountain of life. With His precious blood He has opened the way for the most intimate fellowship with a holy and loving God. We have our best moments here upon earth when we may walk in conscious fellowship with the Lord, and may take an Abba, Father! upon our lips in childlike trust. The nearness of God can fill us in those moments with a wonderful power, and elevate us above the circle of visible things, so that we seem to have access among the angels. In those far too few mountain-moments, we realize something of the unfathomable words of Jesus:

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

"This is life eternal that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

But this conscious knowledge, in which mind and will and heart are active, is, alas, so soon exchanged for the plaint: "My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken me according to thy word!" Indeed, it is but a foretaste of what we once shall enjoy in the knowledge or vision of God. The immediate is still lacking, and therefore we know but in part. As long as we dwell here below we see our God through the mirror of His Word, and that seeing or knowing is incomplete. But we shall see Him without that mirror, face to face,—immediately.

This does not mean that we shall see God with our bodily eyes, but expresses the fact that we shall stand in the very presence of God. We shall know God in reverent worship, and shall experience holy delight. The prophecy shall be fulfilled: "The Lord is there!" Verily, Jesus opened up for us a glorious vista when He said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God!"

This conscious communion with God is



enhanced through the mutual communion of the saints.

The band of love encloses the children of God on the new earth under the new heaven in a way far surpassing anything that we have experienced in this life. Here on earth it is always difficult to have intimate fellowship with each other. Just think of the many languages which form an impassable gulf for most of us when trying to reach each others hearts and minds. This wall of separation shall disappear when all shall speak a common language on the new earth, or, what is equally well possible, when each shall understand the language of the other. Then the misunderstanding and separation caused by the confusion of tongues shall be gone.

Do not ask whether we shall recognize one another. That is self-evident. Intuitively we shall recognize even those saints whom we have never know here below, just as Peter immediately recognized Moses and Elijah when they were with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

In this intuitive way parents will at once recognize their children who have died in

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

infancy, even though they have come to full manhood through a secret power of God. For we think it more than probable that the Creator will in some other way bring to their full development the gifts and talents with which He endowed the children at birth, rather than that these talents should have been choked in an early death.

But even then the circle of adoring saints is not yet complete. Now that heaven and earth have been reconciled, we may conclude that the angels also shall share in the communion of saints. And this is the actual testimony of Scripture. It is the purpose of God, in sending His Son, to unite all things under Him as their Head, both the things in heaven and the things on earth. This purpose is realized by Christ, for the epistle to the Hebrews includes the angels in the communion of the saints. We read: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12: 22-24).

This whole assembly shall find its joy in the SERVICE of God. We know of the angels that they are ever ready to serve. And we would find it difficult to form a concept of eternal joy, that did not include some calling or task which we as redeemed would have to accomplish. We need not doubt, however, whether we shall find some task as ours in that new world. Jesus said to the faithful servant that he would be placed over much. The details of the life of service that shall be ours have not been revealed. We know but this, that we shall ceaselessly serve the Lord as prophets to proclaim His virtues, as priests to bring spiritual sacrifices, and as kings to reign over the works of God's hand. We also know that we shall do all this with the sole purpose to praise our God forever.

That gives us the PURPOSE for which life eternal has been bestowed upon us.

God has created the world, reconciled mankind unto Himself, and redeemed the

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

Church, to glorify His holy Name. It is, therefore, the urge of the saints to make "Glory to God!" the motive of their life. The name of God has been ignored and reviled in thousands of ways in this sinful world. But on the new earth His Name will be sanctified and glorified in the harmonious blending of the voices of men and angels. What an Isaiah saw in vision many ages ago, has then become full reality, for everywhere the chorus resounds: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is filled with His glory!"

The praise of God does not only consist in raising songs of praise. Life eternal itself shall be a song of praise to the glory of God. In all our thinking, meditating, and working no single note of discord will be heard, as is the case now. But the rythm of holy song shall pervade our thinking, speaking, and acting. All shall flow as a song, sing as a song, stimulate as a song. Our whole life shall be harmony. We shall not only sing a psalm. We ourselves shall become a psalm of praise. And that psalm sings God's glory throughout all eternity!



THE PURIFYING POWER OF  
THIS HOPE



XVIII

THE PURIFYING POWER OF  
THIS HOPE

*"And every one that hath this  
hope set on Him purifieth him-  
self, even as He is pure."*

*1 John 3: 3.*

IT WAS OUR DESIRE to limit ourselves exclusively to what Holy Writ reveals on the Resurrection and Life Eternal.

Outside of what the Lord had revealed about these things in His Word we know nothing, absolutely nothing. To guess, and to speculate about our eternal destiny, is nothing but an unholy play of our fantasy. In this case the interests are too important than that we should leave the firm foundation of God's Word. It is better to be satisfied with little that is reliable testimony given by God than to chase after fuller knowledge that is after all but the imagination of the human mind.

We have therefore passed by in silence



many a question which people would like to have answered.

What picture must we form of sanctified creation as a whole?

Shall the woods be filled with birds, or shall birds and beasts be lacking? And if they are preserved in the destruction of the world, as the animals in the days of Noah were preserved from the flood, shall they then never die, since there is no place for death in a sinless creation?

And how shall sinless man be fed? Shall he only eat fruits, as did an Adam in Paradise? Or does Paul mean, when he says that the belly will be brought to nought, that we shall not need food?

And in what way will human society be arranged? And what will be our work?

All these questions must remain unanswered. We are but sure of one thing, and that is, that the fruits of human development will be gathered into the Kingdom of Glory, though we do not know HOW. We must be satisfied with the fact that the results of the age-old struggle to advance humankind will, in some manner or other, be found in that new and eternal order of existence.

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

Our Lord has His reasons for giving us in His Word but a glimpse of that future glory. It would not be beneficial for us to have a detailed knowledge of it. The desire for a better country might then become so strong, especially in days of anguish and oppression, that the energy which we need for our earthly duties might be broken. It is good that we have a strong desire for the coming kingdom, but that yearning must ever remain sane, and that is no doubt one of the reasons why our Lord has drawn a veil over the kingdom of glory.

Besides, it is a question whether we would be able to comprehend a careful description of the state of glory. Even in this dispensation the work, and the fine and noble joys of manhood, are altogether beyond the grasp of a child. A child simply does not comprehend why a full-grown man can find delight in deciphering hieroglyphics. We can, therefore, easily see that the description of a future which is totally different from our present age, since time shall be no more, would be beyond the most mature mind. The Bible itself is full of figures taken from

our present life when it tells us something of the new creation. And that is to us a proof that our mind is still too small to comprehend the fulness of salvation that will be given.

John has written in one of his epistles: "It is not yet revealed what we shall be." He simply adds a sentence which includes perfect salvation and glory, without giving any additional details, when he says: "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as He is." The words are very sober, and yet very rich. They satisfy our desires. But we may not stop with our quotation there. We must take to heart his succeeding words: "And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

John is not giving an exhortation. He does not say: "Let him purify himself."

He states a fact: "He purifieth himself."

The bride who is awaiting the Bridegroom to lead her into a new and glorious life, beautifies herself, and avoids everything that would be displeasing to the Bridegroom. And if you have this hope that Christ is coming to bring you

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

into the Kingdom of His Father, you have a yearning in your soul to purify yourself, even as **He is pure**.

This is your test to try yourself whether the hope that you have for a blessed life hereafter is on a firm foundation. If you do not feel a desire urging you by the grace of God to keep from the pollution of sin, to check your evil passions, to become nobler in mind and conduct, to have a more tender conscience, to lead a pure life, to love the truth, and to hate all sin, then, my brother, you may be flattering yourself with the hope that you shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, but it is a vain hope. For every one who hath this hope set on Him, **PURIFIES himself, even as He is pure**.

You will never be done with this purifying.

Again and again the desire to sin will well up in your heart.

But then you know of the fountain that has been opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem against

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

sin and uncleanness. From this fountain flows the forgiving power of Jesus' blood, and the purifying power of His Spirit, which urges you to resist unto blood, striving against sin, and to follow after sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord.

You hope to inherit life eternal. But then the principle of eternal life must work in you here and now, for whosoever believeth in the Son hath at once eternal life.

You hope to be taken up into the communion of all the saints, and to have a place, be it at the very outer circle, among the redeemed in the Church triumphant. But then the principle of brotherly love must be seen in you here and now, for only that which you have sown in this life will you reap in the future age.

You hope after some span of time, shorter or longer, to praise God forever with His saints. But then the first notes of the songs of praise must here and now ascend from your heart and lips. Your walking in the light must be a continuous hymn of praise unto Him Who has re-

## THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE ETERNAL

deemed you from the fear of death. Our life then expresses the song:

“In sweet communion, Lord, with Thee  
I constantly abide;  
My hand Thou holdest in Thine own  
To keep me near Thy side.

“Whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee,  
To whom my thoughts aspire?  
And having Thee, on earth is nought  
That I can yet desire.

“Thy counsel through my earthly way  
Shall guide me and control,  
And then to glory afterward  
Thou wilt receive my soul.”











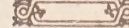
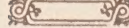
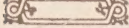












# OUR BIRTHRIGHT and the MESS OF MEAT

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*Isms of today analyzed and compared with the Heidelberg Catechism*

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J. K. VAN BAALEN

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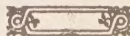
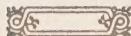
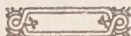
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